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PUBLICATION

**WHAT'S AHEAD IN 2011 FOR
WRESTLING'S BIGGEST STARS!**

PRO **Wrestling** ILLUSTRATED

JOHN CENA VS RANDY ORTON

PWI's SPECIAL 50-CATEGORY ANALYSIS

JEFF HARDY:

Sold His Soul To Hogan/Bischoff

DANIEL BRYAN:

How He Changed WWE Forever

PHILL SHATTER:

A "Future Legend" With Realistic Goals

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WITH HIS TV show due to go off the air this month after more than 25 years, Larry King's name is much in the news these days ... As good as *Larry King Live* could be at times, it was his *USA Today* column that I truly loved ... Read it for 20 years ... King wasn't a wrestling fan per se, but he gave his viewers what they wanted ... Wrestlers are always great in that setting ... Among the many who appeared on his show, I can recall Hulk Hogan, Chris Jericho, Jesse Ventura, Mick Foley, Roddy Piper, Vince McMahon (of course!), The Big Show, Triple-H, Roddy Piper (oh, I mentioned him already?), John Cena, and Chyna ... Speaking of Ventura, you gotta admire him for wanting the best for the wrestlers, but don't you get the feeling that the words "union" and "health care" and "independent contractor" wouldn't come up if Vince offered him a big WrestleMania 27 payday ... I love the choice of Atlanta as this year's host city for WrestleMania ... I sure wish The Omni were still around ... Ending "Ringside" and "International Report" with the latest wrestling deaths is starting to get to me ... Now, even when a wrestler lives to a ripe old age, I remember him when he was in his prime ... Makes me think about my own mortality ... How old is Matt Brock, 111? ... One hundred and eleven—reminds me of the *Honeymooners* episode when Norton took Ralph's temperature and used a match to see where the red line was on the thermometer ... Anyone who doesn't watch *The Honeymooners* because it's old is missing the best TV show ever ... Next to *All In The Family* ... I spent a few days at the Jersey Shore with my wife recently after the death of our beloved dog, Hallee ... What a great dog ... So, so sad ... My former colleague Eric Raskin (the same nincompoop who once told me that he'd never watch *The Honeymooners* because it was in black and white) used to stay as far away from dogs as possible ... Then he got married to a dog person and you know the rest of the story ... King had seven queens ... That's a lot of female influence ... Had a chance to read Shawn Michaels' book, *Heartbreak & Triumph*, while I was away ... I got the feeling Shawn was being totally honest, but I still have my doubts that he came completely clean on his portrayal of The Montreal Screwjob ... If you ever get to speak to Shawn's mom, Carol, she'll be happy to offer her perspective on Michael Shawn Hickenbottom's life ... I kinda wish she wrote the book ... There is not a more principled man walking this planet than Bruno Sammartino ... I have a lot of respect for quite a few wrestlers, but I can think of only one who wouldn't sell his soul to Vince McMahon for a few trinkets ... Still, I get the sense that if Bruno could work with WWE again and not have to be accused of being a sellout, he'd do it ... Jesse Ventura's a hypocrite ... So glad the attack by Angel Orsini on our own Jeff Ruoss was part of WSU's first iPPV ... Our lawyers have all the evidence they need and are all over this ... Jeff's a laidback sort and wants to let it blow over, but I think this witch has to be taught a lesson ... Was it just me who enjoyed seeing Brock Lesnar get his head handed to him by Cain Velasquez? ... The big guy just needed to be humbled ... If Dana White won't allow Lesnar to wrestle Undertaker at WrestleMania, how about Cain vs. Kane? ... Just thinking ... My favorite Larry King quote is: "I remind myself every morning: Nothing I say this day will teach me anything. So if I'm going to learn, I must do it by listening."

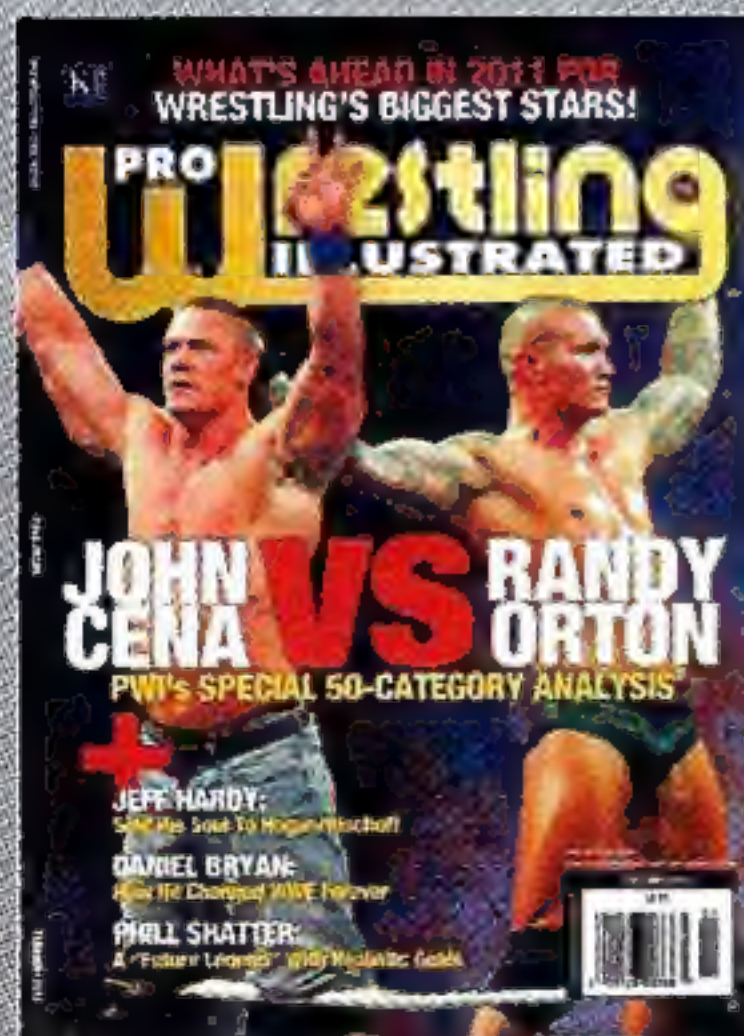
**Stu Saks
Publisher**



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BEFORE THE BELL

COMPILED BY MIKE BESSLER

WRESTLING'S 101 STRANGEST MATCHES

If you're the type of person that enjoys movie outtakes and bloopers more than the actual movie, *Wrestling's 101 Strangest Matches* by Oliver Hurley (Pitch Press Ltd., 181 pages, £9.99) is a must-read book.

Appointed with plenty of color photos on glossy stock, everything about this behind-the-scenes peek at wrestling-run-amuck is geared toward fun—from the faux-stitched leather cover to the clip art to the succinct tales of professional wrestling's wackiest moments.

Hurley, who encourages readers to consume his book one story at a time rather than in long sittings, keeps each tale short and punchy—most of the stories are no longer than two pages each. The writing is tight, witty, and, at times, laugh-out-loud funny.

The book is written in British (including a foreword by hardcore indy wrestler Thumbtack Jack), meaning American readers might have trouble understanding some of the cultural references sprinkled throughout, but that hardly gets in the way of Hurley's writing.

Whether discussing Perry Saturn momentarily turning his match against late jobber Mike Bell into a *real* fight or a Japanese tag team title match featuring two macaque monkeys, Hurley has a knack for poking

fun at pro wrestling without disgracing it or insulting its fans—even when the industry itself has insulted them.

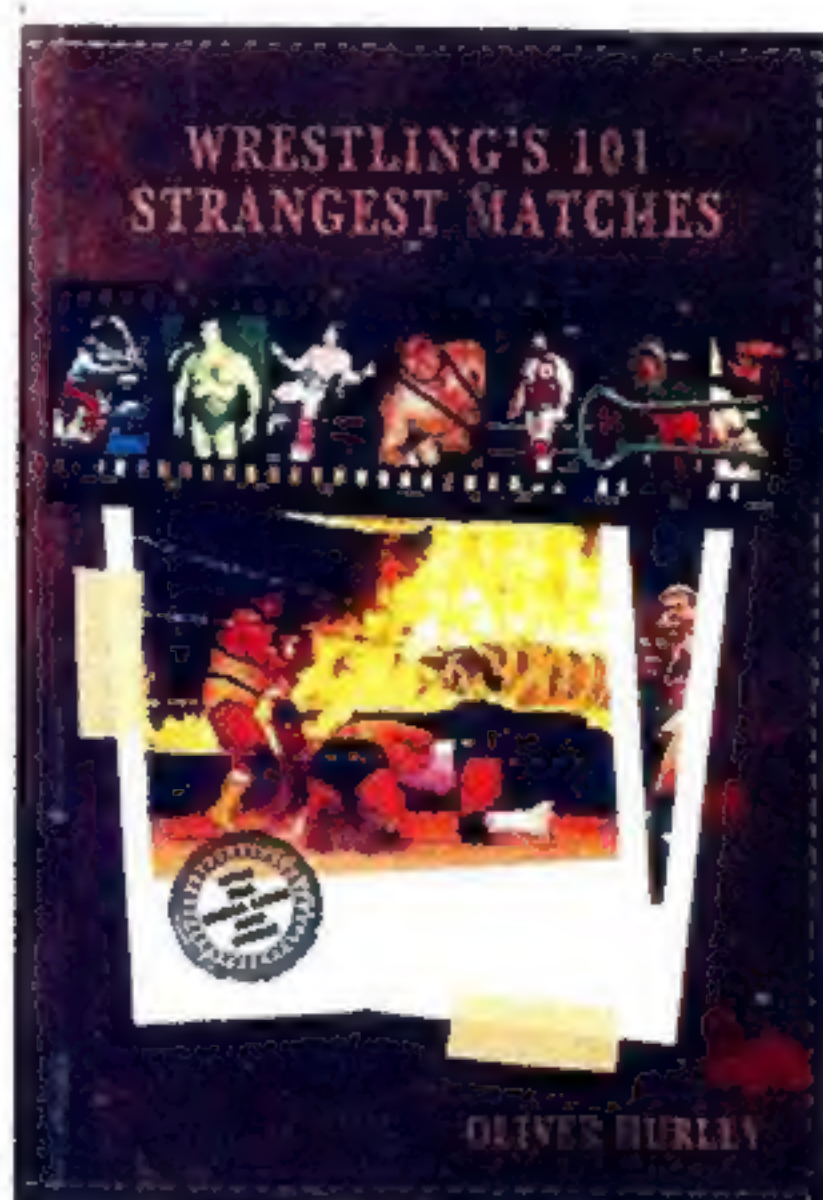
Hurley approaches the subject as if readers are unfamiliar with the inner workings of professional wrestling, so longtime fans and so-called smart fans may have to forgive some of his more remedial explanations, and Internet fans may gripe that Hurley offers nothing they're not already familiar with, but, rest assured, his sardonic treatment of each story warrants a fresh look.

Wrestling's 101 Strangest Matches earns praise also for its wide scope. Hurley touches on turn-of-the-20th century grapplers such as Ed "Strangler" Lewis and Joe Stetcher, and he covers the globe. No era or territory is spared, which is a testament to the legwork and research undertaken by the author.

Wrestling's 101 Strangest Matches is also noteworthy for its consistently light tone. Considering the subject matter, it must have been quite tempting for Hurley to work in his personal views on wrestling's darker side, but he shows tremendous restraint throughout the book and keeps the editorializing to a minimum.

Indeed, readers certainly shouldn't expect a heavy, long-winded, detail-laden read from *Wrestling's 101 Strangest Matches*, but for its overall enjoyability, we give it five out of five suplexes.

—Frank Krewda



TALKIN' TRASH

Here's a list of the top 10 wrestling-related items you've been talking about lately and our gut reactions to each:

10. WWE finally produces a DVD set dedicated to the highlights of Chris Jericho's career. The wait is finally over, and we didn't even have to endure DVD retrospectives for the likes of Goldust and Vladimir Kozlov to get to the good stuff.

9. Alberto Del Rio lampoons Rey Mysterio Jr. by bringing a costumed Chihuahua into the ring. Is Del Rio taking his cues from Paris Hilton's *The Simple Life*?

8. Internet pay-per-view platform gaining traction among indy groups. Wrestling enthusiasts who are tired of what the mainstream offers stand to benefit as independent promotions like DGUSA, Ring of Honor, and WSU increase their presence in a new medium.

7. Natalya brings excitement back to the WWE women's division as she emerges as a serious contender for championship gold. Although WWE has some respectable talent on its women's roster, Natalya has the blend of natural ability, pedigree, and nostalgic appeal that resonates with longtime fans.

6. Smackdown makes the big jump to Syfy. No more pro wrestling on MyNetworkTV? Look for an

DOUBLE TAKE

Think you've seen it all, wrestling fans? See if you can spot the 10 differences between these photos of Mickie James.

First, a little background on the photo (sorry, this probably won't help you get the answers):

Mickie James was the subject of "Press Conference" in the November 2010 issue of *PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED*. Scheduled for an appearance at George's Collectibles' Sig-namania VI on September 25 in Fairless Hills, Pennsylvania, our publisher, Stu Saks, sacrificed a Saturday afternoon to attend the event and personally hand a copy to Mickie. (That Stu, what a team player!)

Looking at the photo, it's quite apparent that Mickie was quite pleased with what she saw.

See how many of the differences you can find in this photo, professionally manipulated in Photoshop 6.0 by staff artist Kevin Boone. The answers are on page 9. No cheating!



Photo by Stu Saks



influx of digital converter boxes on eBay now that all major WWE programming is back on basic cable.

5. Daniel Bryan comes into his own as WWE U.S. champion. Some impressive bouts against the likes of The Miz and Sheamus will surely boost Bryan's reputation as a fierce in-ring competitor.

4. TNA's mystery "They" faction reveals itself. No telling what dastardly plans Hogan and Bischoff have in store for the TNA Universe ... A new TNA/ Celebrity Championship Wrestling collaboration, perhaps?

3. An anonymous general manager continues to boss around the cast and crew of *Monday*

***Night Raw*.** If you're tired of seeing a talking laptop call the shots, check out Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* and see what happens when humankind exacts revenge on an overbearing computer. It'll ease the pain just a little bit.

2. John Cena reluctantly joins The Nexus. In a related story, the sale of Nexus-themed merchandise is up 750 percent.

1. Jeff Hardy lands the TNA World championship at Bound for Glory. He has the support of some key players at present, but Hardy might soon find out that it's often lonely at the top.

ENTRANCE THEMES WE'D LIKE TO HEAR

What makes a great entrance in the world of professional wrestling? Some bombastic pyrotechnics, a picturesque pose or two, and the right music, of course. Here are our suggestions for new themes for some of our favorite grapplers:

The Miz—"Vanity" by Lady Gaga. Much like The Miz, Lady Gaga loves getting attention for her outlandish behavior. Her ode to self-obsession seems like the perfect score for "The Awesome One's" entrance.

Motor City Machine Guns—"Detroit Rock City" by Kiss. What better way to celebrate Detroit's most dominant tag team than with rock 'n' roll's quintessential salute to the Motor City?

Sheamus—"Come On Eileen" by Dexy's Midnight Runners. Sure, this Irish lullaby turned one-hit wonder is a little more upbeat than the Celtic Warrior's stone-cold persona, but Sheamus looks like he could use a little cheering up.

MsChif—"Super Freak" by Rick James. Well, you wouldn't take her home to meet your mother, would you?

Eric Young—"Dazed And Confused" by Led Zeppelin. We think this classic anthem of bewilderment is a good representation of Young's state of mind since suffering a blow to the head courtesy of Suicide.

Maryse—"Gold Digger" by Kanye West. No offense to Ted DiBiase Jr., but most people tend to share the opinion that Maryse is after a lot more than Ted's sparkling personality.

EV 2.0—"Symphony No. 7" by Dmitri Shostakovich. Written in tribute to the war weary people of Leningrad at the height of World War II, the celebrated "invasion march" portion of this piece is a fitting theme for the battle-hardened alumni of ECW.

Evan Bourne—"Learn To Fly" by Foo Fighters. Although he's mastered the art of aerobic maneuvers in the ring, Bourne still hopes to fly his way to the very top of the card.

Angelina Love—"Love Hurts" by Nazareth. Angelina's opponents can probably attest to the fact that an encounter with Love can prove to be a painful experience, indeed.



WE HEARD THAT!

"To be honest, and no disrespect meant, but it wasn't a hard decision to make. You have to want to test yourself against the best, and WWE is the pinnacle of our industry."

—Then-Ring of Honor champion Tyler Black on his decision to sign with WWE, from an interview with *The Sun* (UK)



"Wrestling is not a full-time job. It's not an entitlement. It's something that people work hard to do. Anyone who gets to that level—whether it be WWE or TNA or even a developmental contract—should understand how hard they've worked to get to where they are. But at the same time, they need to understand it might not last forever and it's never too soon to be thinking about retirement."

—Hardcore legend Mick Foley from an interview with ring-rap.com, commenting on the question of healthcare and pensions for professional wrestlers

"There's nothing that's going to happen to me in a cage that hasn't already happened to me. I've been knocked out, I've had broken bones, I've had tendons torn, I've been beaten half to death, and usually I've volunteered for it. I love MMA. I want to support it. And I want to toss my hat in the ring."

—Former WWE star Dave Batista, talking with mmaprime.tv's Aaron Tru

"In my wildest dreams I wanted to wrestle in WCW, and now here I am sitting in the locker room with Sting, Flair, Nash, Hogan, Double-J. Good grief. Isn't it something? Now, not only am I standing in the ring with Flair, I'm standing in the ring side by side with Kevin Nash and Sting."

—"Pope" D'Angelo Dinero to Mike Mooneyham, discussing his evolution from fan to performer

"Creative freedom in WWE is kind of like an oxymoron from a wrestler's standpoint. From an artist's

standpoint, it's a lot more fun when you can get out there and be yourself and goof off a little bit."

—Mr. Anderson to *The Baltimore Sun's* Kevin Eck on the creative differences between WWE and TNA

"How do they get away (with) calling me an independent contractor and yet I have to sign an

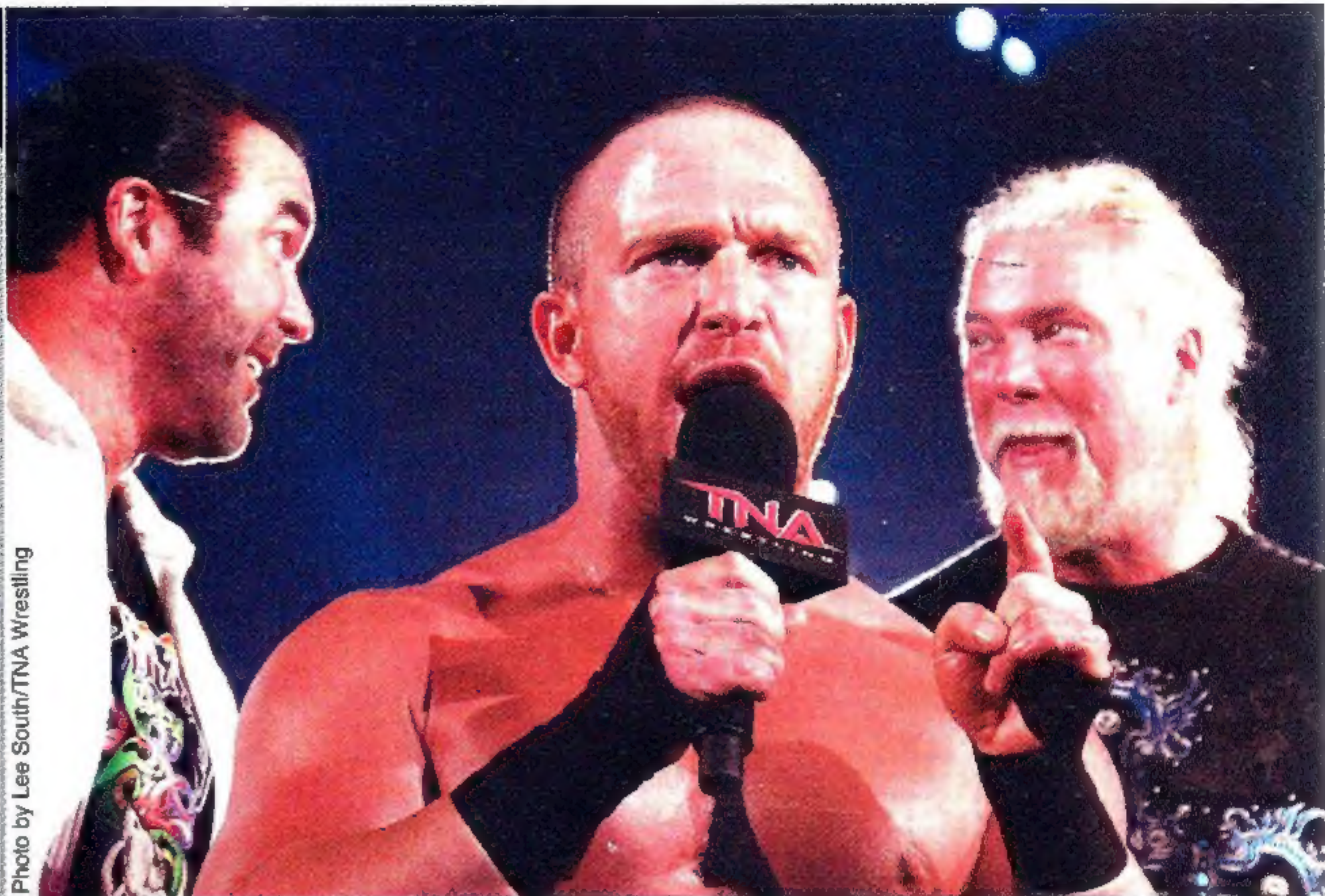
exclusivity contract? I can't work for anyone else. They get around paying Social Security. Why does the government let them off the hook?"

—Jesse Ventura to Hartford Courant's Roger Catlin, discussing the way former WWE CEO and current Senate nominee Linda McMahon ran the company.

CAPTION ME!

Think you're a better writer than the editors at *PWI*? Here's your chance to prove it, punk! This shot of Eric Young, Kevin Nash, and Scott Hall deserves a short, concise, and downright uproarious caption. If you think you are up to the challenge, e-mail your zany quips to prowrestlingillustrated@yahoo.com, or slap a stamp on an envelop and snail-mail it to "Caption Me!," Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034. Three issues from now, we'll share with you the best of the bunch—and the funnier the better!

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling



MONTH'S BEST

Santino: "Okay, Vladimir ... now you take it!"

Kozlov: "Uh ... nyet."

—Beth Korba, Mt. Carmel, PA

Only if Santino can get back to a vertical base without hurting himself can he truly be called "The Milan Miracle."

—Edie Toddman, St. John, NL

First he wanted to be Beth Phoenix, now he wants to be Melina.

—Conner Milroy, Joliet, IL

Kozlov: "Okay, Santino. *You* got yourself into that position, *you* have to get yourself out of it."

—William Rose, Killeen, TX

Nothing brings Kozlov joy quite like Santino's graceful dancing.

—Joseph Fitzgerald, Cleveland, OH

Reminded of his own prowess at the Russian Cossack Dance, Kozlov can only laugh at Santino's feeble attempt at dancing.

—Rina Verba, Brighton Beach, NY



ANSWERS TO DOUBLE TAKE:



RINGSIDE

WITH BILL MELTZER

SHORTLY BEFORE election Day in the contentious U.S. Senate race in Connecticut, the state's Secretary of State, **Susan Bysiewicz**, issued a controversial directive. She ordered poll workers to turn away registered voters wearing WWE apparel, denying them the opportunity to vote (presumably for Republican nominee **Linda McMahon**) unless they returned wearing non-political clothing or removed a WWE hat. In response, **Vince McMahon** sought a court injunction blocking the directive and, according to a WWE-

issued press release, filed a lawsuit "on behalf of any Connecticut citizen who wants to exercise their constitutional right to vote."

The suit claimed Bysiewicz' directive was unconstitutional, calling it a "flagrant act of censorship and discrimination" that violated the First Amendment (freedom of speech) and both state and federal voting rights. Defenders of the directive said that it was issued to protect a state law prohibiting electioneering within 75 feet of the polling place and that no one was specifically being denied the right to vote.

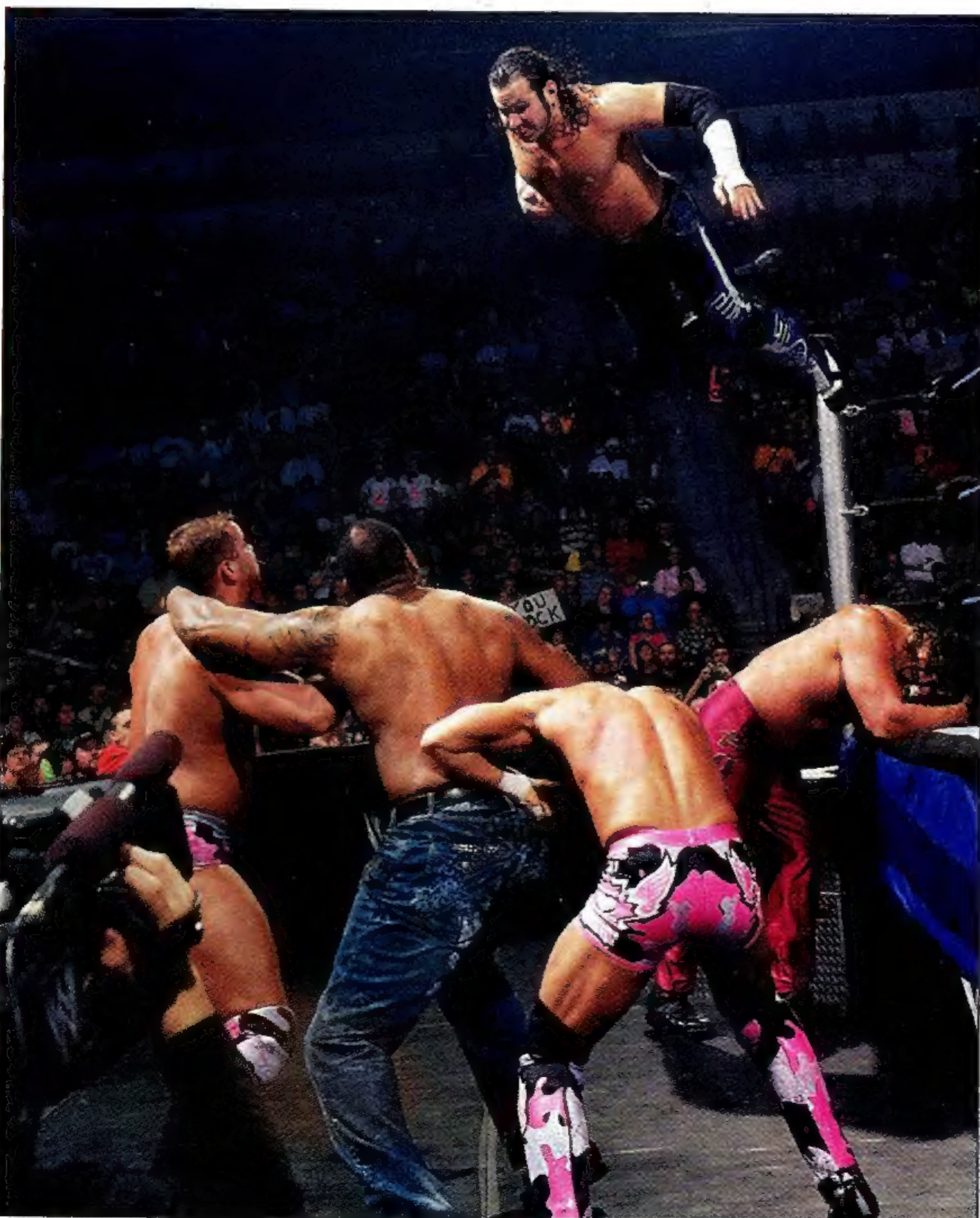
Bysiewicz later clarified her directive saying, "If someone walks in wearing a **Hulk Hogan** shirt, that's not a problem. If someone is wearing a T-shirt that [directly or indirectly] says vote for [Democratic candidate] **Dick Blumenthal** or Linda McMahon, clearly those kind of items are prohibited."

Representatives of the Blumenthal campaign went on the record to say that they agreed with the McMahons on this particular issue, and had no objections to voters wearing WWE apparel to the polling place.

My personal take: The whole situation is ridiculous. Can you imagine California Attorney General **Jerry Brown** restricting voters wearing eBay apparel because **Meg Whitman**, Brown's opponent for governor, had been CEO of that company? Or New Jersey AG **Paula Dow** ordering anyone wearing a Philadelphia Eagles jersey to be turned away from the polls because that would be considered electioneering on behalf of congressional candidate and ex-Eagle offensive lineman **Jon Runyan**?

It's a good thing Bysiewicz did some quick backtracking because she would have lost in court and been even more embarrassed than she probably is already.

WWE's recent decision to release **Matt Hardy** from his contract surprised no one in the wrestling business. More surprising



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Now that Matt Hardy has been released by WWE, all signs point to him joining his brother, Jeff, in TNA. As of press time, though, Matt was still waiting out a non-complete restriction.

was the fact that Hardy's second stint in the federation lasted five years, given his unrepentantly outspoken personality, the rollercoaster nature of the relationship between the federation and brother **Jeff Hardy**, and the elder Hardy brother's inability to push through the mid-card.

The inevitability of Matt Hardy's release had become clear in the months leading up to it, as federation officials leaked high-level gripes over his declining work ethic and deteriorating conditioning. In the meantime, Hardy's online criticisms of his employer's creative direction grew more frequent and acerbic.

Once Hardy's non-compete requirement is over, he is expected to sign with TNA and rejoin his brother. Jeff Hardy has already publicly lobbied for it, saying his brother was mistreated by WWE. He added, "I think if he came here, you would see the happiest, most dangerous, and exciting Matt Hardy you've ever seen."

With both Hardy brothers (assuming Jeff's still-unresolved legal problems do not force him out of action) likely to compete in TNA the near future, there has been widespread speculation over whether the two will align, or if they will rekindle their memorable feud from WWE, perhaps in the reversed roles of recently turned Jeff serving as the heel and Matt as the fan favorite.

One person who will presumably not be around in TNA by the time Matt Hardy makes up his mind about his future is **Kevin Nash**. The veteran made it known repeatedly both on his Twitter feed and on a radio interview that he had grown disenchanted with the company and intended to leave as soon as his contract expired. True to his word, Nash departed the company the day his contract ran out.

Just prior to his departure, Nash went online to tweet a parting shot at **Rob Van Dam** and Jeff

Hardy. "RVD said Jeff Hardy and him are rock stars. In my prime, I was selling out 30,000-plus-seat domes. They can't draw 1,000 on the road," wrote the 51-year-old Nash, who is uncertain if he will continue wrestling.

C.M. Punk's recent appearances on *Raw* looks to be part of a long-term brand switch for the for-

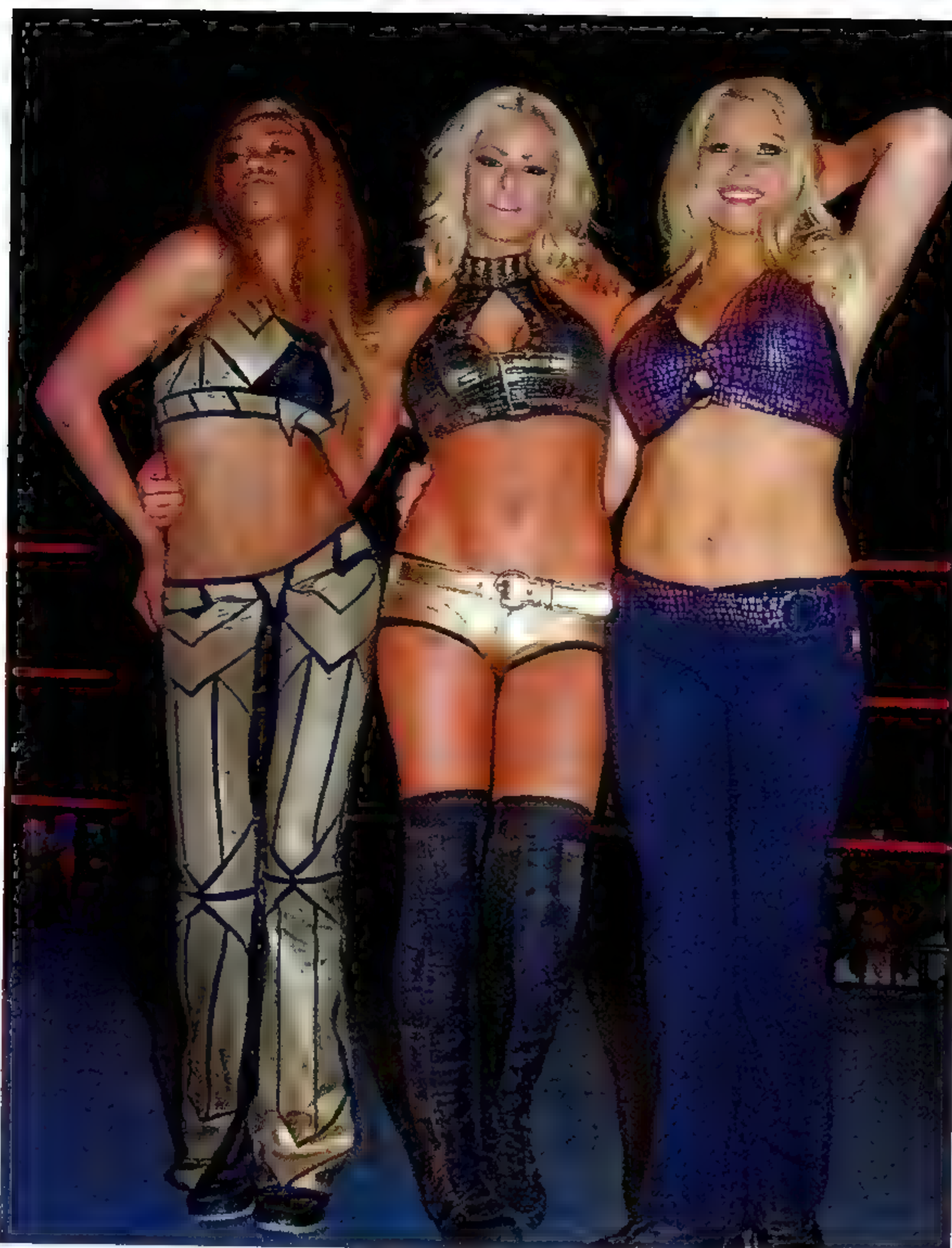
mer Smackdown headliner. Punk, who has been feuding with **R-Truth** on the *Raw* mid-card, has cut promos saying that he's "beaten everyone in Smackdown" and is looking for a new challenge in *Raw*.

Maryse recently gave an interview to *The Baltimore Sun* in which she attempted to discuss the need for current WWE Divas



Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

Kevin Nash has had enough of TNA, so he says. The six-time world champion announced via Twitter—and a few radio shows—that he would not be renewing his contract with TNA and that he was unsure about his future in the business.



Maryse may have a point when saying today's WWE Divas dress less provocatively than years ago. But they still have sex appeal that cannot be denied.

to balance sex appeal within the limits of WWE's TV-PG direction. Presumably overlooking the fact she posed nude for *Playboy*, Maryse said, "We do wear revealing outfits, but it's not like we're wearing a g-string like in the past. I'd never wear that—I don't think it would be very comfortable. Our outfits are sexy but not provocative to the point where people will say, 'Oh my God, my kids can't watch this.'"

Jesse Ventura has continued to make strong statements in opposition to the lack of unionization and the contracting practices in WWE, which he contends illegally forces wrestlers into arrangements with a particular promotion

while classifying wrestlers as independent contractors.

In a one-hour interview with *cyinterview.com*, the WWE Hall of Famer and former Minnesota governor claimed that no deep thought or investigation is necessary to figure out why so many wrestlers die young. "They abused steroids and they abused a lot of other things, and when you do that, you're living life in the fast lane and, you know, you roll the dice," he said. "I don't need to ask questions, because I know why they're dying. You notice I'm not dying, because I never abused steroids. I tried them, but I never used them very much. If you notice, I still have my build. The guys

who use steroids lose their build as they get older because they've got to stay on them."

After impressing WWE talent scouts reviewing his performance in matches with **Tyler Black** and **Claudio Castagnoli**, WWE has signed Heritage Championship Wrestling champion **Donovan "The Future" Ruddick** to a developmental contract and assigned him to Florida Championship Wrestling. As is usually the case with developmental talents, he is likely to be assigned a new ring name and persona.

The wrestling community is mourning the recent passing of **Jorge "El Gigante" Gonzalez** and **Herb Larson**. Our sincere condolences go out to their families and friends.

Gonzalez, 44, was a star center for the Argentinean national basketball team. In 1988, he was drafted by **Ted Turner's** Atlanta Hawks. When he tried out for the team the following season, it soon became apparent that the towering center, who stood a legitimate 7'6", did not have NBA-caliber agility. But Turner, who also owned WCW, suggested Gonzalez consider a wrestling career. He debuted in WCW in May 1990 after undergoing a year of training. Over the next five years, Gonzalez wrestled in WCW, WWF, and New Japan before retiring from wrestling.

Never the darling of wrestling purists, Gonzalez was often maligned for a lack of wrestling ability. Nevertheless, he was successful and reasonably popular among fans. In WCW, he had a decent run as a fan favorite dubbed **El Gigante**, aligning himself with **Sting**, **Lex Luger**, and **The Steiner Brothers** in opposition to **Ric Flair**, **Sid Vicious**, and other federation heels.

In January 1993, he jumped from WCW to the WWF. There, he became a rulebreaker and donned an infamous full-body suit of muscles and hair. Managed by



Jorge Gonzalez, who recently passed away after years of poor health, never became the superstar many thought he could have been, but with Harvey Wippleman managing him, Gonzales did have some memorable moments in the WWF, including this match against The Undertaker at WrestleMania 9.

Harvey Wippleman, the renamed **Giant Gonzalez** feuded for eight months with **The Undertaker** and **Paul Bearer**. The feud culminated in a Rest In Peace match, won by Undertaker. Afterward, Gonzalez split with Wippleman and had a brief run in a fan-favorite role before leaving in October 1993. He spent the remainder of his career in New Japan, competing under his given name.

After retirement, Gonzalez moved back to Argentina. Like many people born with gigantism, he suffered serious health prob-

lems. In his later years, he was confined to a wheelchair and was chronically ill due to kidney failure. Apart from his basketball and wrestling careers, he appeared in numerous television programs and several movies in small roles, both in Argentina and North America.

Larson, 83, had a long career in the central, mid-western, and several southern NWA territories from the late-1940s to late-1970s. Although rarely a headliner, the Hamilton, Ontario, native was considered a tough competitor. Under his own name, he had long runs in

Tennessee under **Roy Welch** and **Nick Gulas**. In Gulf Coast Wrestling, he was the masked **Proud Rebel**. Along with **Don Lortie**, he was one-half of the original masked **Medics** tag team. Larson also had a run with **Jack Pfefer's** promotion, working under the bizarre ring name **Elmer the Rocket**.

Larson's real-life older brother, **George Larson**, was an Olympic swimmer, competing in the 1932 and 1936 Games. He also had a wrestling career, primarily working under the ring name "**Irish**" **Tom Collins**. □

QUICK COUNT

BY AL CASTLE

HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO you and yours from us and ours. Nothing brings Yuletide cheer like a big holiday dinner with the family ... and this bountiful edition of "Quick Count," so dig in.

TURKEY

Matt Hardy should count his blessings that the deadline for *Inside Wrestling's* "Turnbuckle Turkey Awards" was sometime in the summer (Volume 36, 2010). If it were a few months later, he may just have dominated the balloting.

It's hard to think of anyone who

has embarrassed himself more in 2010 than Hardy, who dominated wrestling headlines in the fall with his bizarre antics. They were made public in a series of disturbing Internet videos that showed a slurring, out-of-shape Hardy nonsensically rambling.

While it might be tempting to simply mock Hardy for making such a spectacle of himself, the truth is that his situation should be a cause of concern for fans, wrestlers, and promoters alike. Hardy's condition has been so alarming that WWE pulled him from a pair of live events in September.

Hardy may get a kick out of all the attention he's been getting in recent months, but it's the wrong kind of attention. Hardy needs to get his act together so he can return to entertaining fans in the ring, rather than on his Twitter account.

HOT POTATOES

There was a full decade in between the night Bruno Sammartino defeated Buddy Rogers in the first-ever WWF heavyweight title change and when Sammartino beat Stan Stasiak to capture his second championship in 1973.

Over those 10 years, the championship changed hands just five times—the same number of times the title changed hands in the first nine months of 2010.

Indeed, the frequency at which world titles change hands these days remains astonishing. As recently outlined in an analy-

sis by the *Pro Wrestling Torch* newsletter, the WWE heavyweight championship changed hands a startling 16 times in the span of 24 months. In comparison, when Hulk Hogan defeated Sgt. Slaughter in 1991 it was only the 15th time the title changed hands since the company was founded 28 years earlier.

Certainly, with the sport changing as much as it has over the past 20 years, it's only natural that world titles would change hands more often. But it remains a fact that the more a world title is passed around, the less wearing it means.

STUFFING

Being a wrestling fan in a major market can take its toll not only on your wallet, but on your schedule, too.

Never was that more true than during one particularly action-stuffed Saturday evening in the New York Metropolitan Area on September 11. The day began with the Wrestling Reunion convention in Rahway, New Jersey, that featured the likes of Kevin Nash and Tully Blanchard signing autographs. Immediately after the convention, EVOLVE Wrestling held a show in the same venue headlined by Bryan Danielson vs. Munenori Sawa.

The show ended in time for fans to rush through the Lincoln Tunnel and catch Ring of Honor's Glory By Honor event in Manhattan.

Others may have elected to drive a little bit farther to Long Island, where Danielson was competing in his second match of the day for the New York Wrestling Connection. The event was held just six miles away from where Fight the World Wrestling was simultaneously holding a show featuring Mick Foley and The Iron Sheik.

It's great to have so many options for your wrestling dollar, but promoters would be wise not to step on each others' toes when scheduling events. Fans can only be in one place at one time.



Photo by George Nisipitana

Whichever "version" of Matt Hardy that has been online lately has been causing concern for Al Castle, who says it's about time for Hardy to focus on entertaining the WWE Universe instead of handful of Twitter followers.



Honoring Bret Hart's brilliant career at Madison Square Garden was a wonderful gesture on WWE's part. But nobody's doing the "Hit Man" any favors by allowing him to wrestle.

CORN

Comedy has always had its place in wrestling, and when done well can really add something to a product. I still smile when I think of Bob Barker's exchange with Chris Jericho during *Raw*'s version of *The Price Is Right*. But writers and wrestlers must be careful not to step over the line between tongue-in-cheek campiness and lame, cornball humor.

WWE took a running jump over that line during the September 27 edition of *Raw*, which featured Edge interviewing *Raw*'s anonymous general manager.

Edge's argument with a talking laptop computer stands out as a low point for WWE this year. And just when the segment seemed like it could get no cornier, the computer screamed in agony as Edge destroyed it. *Sheesh!*

Perhaps some people found

that segment funny, but I can't imagine their chuckles were louder than the collective groans of those who did not.

But, at least one person found it funny—Vince McMahon. And, unfortunately, that's all that matters.

VEGETABLES

Legends like Bret Hart, Hulk Hogan, and Mick Foley will always have a place in the sport. But with every year that passes, and every bit of mobility they lose, it gets tougher to justify having them involved in any physical capacity.

Ten years after being forced to retire because of a head injury, Bret Hart has competed in several matches for WWE in 2010. During "Bret Hart Appreciation Night" at Madison Square Garden in September, Bret even came off the second rope to drop an elbow during a six-man tag team match. Is it

really a good idea for a 53-year-old stroke victim to take such a risk?

Then there's Hogan, who, in the midst of taking part in a big angle with Kevin Nash and Sting leading to Bound for Glory, suffered a serious back injury while bending over to pick up a seashell. What would have happened if he were actually booked for a match?

Just weeks later, TNA headlined a live edition of *Impact* with a bout between 61-year-old Ric Flair and 45-year-old Mick Foley. While Flair may be 16 years his elder, it's actually been Foley who has looked slow and out of shape for years, and has no business competing in an actual match.

Here's a good rule for any wrestling promoter to follow: If a wrestler has a hard time walking to the ring, maybe it's time for him or her to stop taking bumps. Maybe. □

KREW-CUTS

BY FRANK KREWDA

Third time a charm? While TNA management has paid occasional lip service to its Top 10 heavyweight rankings on *Impact*, and has wisely involved fans in the voting, I feel the company should be doing even more to promote its ranking system, and thus generate more interest in its product among casual viewers.

Having Kurt Angle declare that he would start at the bottom of the rankings and climb his way into title contention, as he did many weeks ago, was a step in the right direction. But TNA needs to follow through with other wrestlers on a weekly basis. One good—and obvious—way to publicize the rankings and their significance would be to have announcers Mike Tenay and Taz—rather than shill the next PPV—spend a few extra moments explaining how the outcome of, say, a D'Angelo Dinero or Samoa Joe match affects their place in the rankings. It needn't be anything dramatic, just a subtle change that, over time, I feel would make TNA's matches more meaningful to casual viewers.

This idea could potentially make TNA/*Impact* more of a destination for fans seeking for "competitive" in-ring action. As Vince McMahon has made abundantly clear over the past two decades, WWE is all about sports-entertainment, not athletic competition. Accordingly, WWE makes no pretense about having its "Superstars" follow a logical progression to a world title. This has cre-

ated a third means by which TNA can distinguish itself from WWE (women's and tag team wrestling being the other two). Hopefully, TNA will make the most of this opportunity.

Grin and Bear it. No question, The Undertaker has certainly gotten lots of mileage out of his "Dead Man" persona through the years, but if you ask me, the true immortal of the 'Taker franchise has been Paul Bearer.

After taking several years off as an in-ring talent, Bearer recently returned to the WWE spotlight where, despite turning on The Undertaker in favor of Kane, his spookily warbled interviews and dramatic facial expressions were once again a monster hit with fans.

Bearer, who'd worked on-and-off behind the WWE scenes for much of the past decade, hasn't lost a step. Hopefully, WWE will find an on-air role for Bearer even after the Kane-'Taker feud resolves itself. Best. Manager. Ever.

There she goes again. Boy, it seems like just two years ago that indy wrestler Angel Orsini was in our offices threatening to clog our septic system with a copy of the November 2008 issue of *PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED*. Orsini had been excluded from our inaugural "Female 50" ranking and was intent on expressing her indignation in a memorable way. Fortunately,



Despite being off the air for some time, Paul Bearer had no problem getting into character during his most recent WWE appearances. Impressed by Bearer's ability to entertain after all these years, Frank Krewda calls him the best manager ever.

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The ever-contentious Angel Orsini was seemingly A-OK with our coverage of her career in recent times (inset). That was until early-November, when she attacked Managing Editor Jeff Ruoss at a WSU card because *PWI* had failed to recognize her All Guts/No Glory title.

we convinced Orsini not to flush the magazine down our toilet, our septic system was spared, and Orsini ranked rather well in subsequent "Female 50" lists (number 22 in 2009, and number 28 in 2010).

Naturally, we thought we had been giving Orsini her just due and that Angel's animus toward us was a thing of the past. But her behavior at a recent WSU RPV demonstrated just how incorrect we were.

With *PWI* staff on hand to recognize WSU champion Mercedes Martinez as WSU's Wrestler of the Year for a fantastic 2010 campaign, Orsini interrupted an in-ring award ceremony to run down *PWI* and WSU for failing to recognize her unsanctioned All Guts/No Glory title. After voicing her gripes and making many threats, she actually slugged Managing Editor Jeff Ruoss, igniting a chaotic scene that threatened to delay the start of the show.

"The All Guts/No Glory title is about respect," an unapologetic Orsini said after the incident. "By refusing to acknowledge my belt as an official title, *PWI* has once again shown me a total lack of it. So, once again, I felt I needed to send a message."

We hear you, Angel, loud and clear. But you will not bully us into recognizing your title as an official championship, even though WSU chose to sanction the belt.

Buzz cuts ... As we've pointed out on the pages of this magazine countless times before, the NWA, in terms of prestige and influence, is undoubtedly a shell of what it was back when Jack Brisco and Ric Flair were defending the title. But in fairness to the current crop of NWA wrestlers and fans, I'd like to point out just because the marquee is not as bright as it once was, that doesn't mean the competition is any less intense. Consider that current heavyweight champion Adam Pearce's main rivals—Colt Cabana, Joey Ryan, and Scorpio Sky—all hold victories over him in tag matches or non-title situations. Plus, men like Charlie Haas and Phill Shatter, who have also taken Pearce to the limit, remain perpetual threats to his title. How many promotions of any size offer that kind of parity at the top of its card? ... Congratulations to Natalya, who defeated Michelle McCool for the WWE Divas title on the November 2 *Raw*. For months, wrestling fans that were disgruntled with the "model" looks and limited repertoire of many WWE Divas, pointed to Neidhart as the personification of what a women's wrestling champion should be—an

experienced, pedigreed, ring technician, who could actually wrestle. If that's what WWE fans expect of their female champion, Natalya certainly seems to fit the bill, despite her relative lack of accomplishment thus far into her WWE tenure. I'm curious to see how enthused the Nattie backers remain after a few months of WWE failing to produce any good contenders to her throne. After all, her competition will be the same Divas the fans complained about in the first place. As history proves, a champion is only as good as the challengers he/she faces ... By time you read this, indy wrestler Melissa Coates might have already transitioned into the next phase of her career as a member of the Lingerie Football League's Philadelphia Passion franchise. At first glance, the news of Coates bringing her assets to the gridiron may seem to be of limited significance to wrestling fans. However, it could potentially prove to be a changing point for the future of women's wrestling, as, theoretically, the LFL could become a fertile breeding ground for athletic, good-looking females who want to test that athleticism in a wrestling ring. □

CONFERENCE PRESS CONFERENCE

Punk has the ability to bring down even the biggest of opponents, like The Big Show. He's going to need every move in his arsenal if he wants to rebound from his less-than-impressive 2010.



Photo by George Napolitano

C.M. Punk

THE LAST 12 months have not been kind to three-time WWE World champion C.M. Punk. Ever since emerging victorious in his feud with Jeff Hardy and then dropping the title to The Undertaker, Punk has floundered.

Punk's cult-like Straight Edge Society turned out to be a failure, costing Punk more matches (and, ultimately, his hair) than it helped him win. Meanwhile, as he slipped from main-event status to the mid-card, Punk's persona went from that of a brutally honest but smug and self-righteous crusader to an out-of-touch buffoon and bully. He ended being humiliated in feuds with Rey Mysterio Jr. and The Big Show, which hastened the demise of the now-defunct Straight Edge Society.

In an effort to make a fresh start and re-establish himself as a threat to capture a world title, Punk has looked to his past for inspiration. On a cosmetic level, he has gotten rid of his wild-bearded Straight Edge Society look and re-adopted elements of the physical appearances he sported during his successful periods in WWE and his early days as a star on the independent season. More importantly, Punk has reintroduced a few old maneuvers into his ring repertoire and reasserted his outcast-by-choice loner attitude rather than trying to form a new faction in his own image.

Punk recently spoke via conference call with **PWI** Editor-in-Chief Frank Krewda and contributing writers Matt Brock and Bill Meltzer. He discussed the reasons (as he sees them) for why things went awry in the last year and renewed his pledge to recapture one of the two big WWE singles titles.

Frank Krewda: When we last spoke with you, you were gloating about getting the best of Jeff Hardy. Lately, you've been much more subdued. What do you think went wrong since your most recent WWE championship victory?

C.M. Punk: First things first. It's not my nature to boast. You should know better than that, Frank. What I am is someone who is unfailingly truthful. If there's one thing I've learned in this life is that most people can't stand to hear the truth.

Krewda: Okay, so what's the truthful reason why 2010 wasn't nearly as successful for you as the previous year?

Punk: The truthful reason is

“The people I embraced ended up being a detriment to me, and their interference in matches I had well-in-hand cost me in the end. It was a lesson learned by me.”

that I let my compassion for other people and my conviction in the beauty of living the straight edge lifestyle get the best of me. Society doesn't want individuality. Society doesn't truly want people to be sober and clear-headed, because when you look at things with a clear focus, you see that the whole system is messed up. I made a decision years ago to reject the system and to live straight edge, and it's the best thing I ever did. I chose to be better than the

mindless masses. I tried to share my heartfelt philosophy with the fans and with lost souls like Luke Gallows and Serena. And you see what it got me.

Matt Brock: So you're saying that society is to blame for why you couldn't beat Rey Mysterio Jr. or The Big Show? Society made you run away from Kane and leave the arena in a no-disqualification match?

Punk: No, you besotted old hack, that's not what I'm saying. I'm saying that the full responsibility is on my own shoulders. I should have known that weak-willed, low intellect people like Gallows and Serena were incapable of grasping what I was trying to teach them. People say that I directed The Straight Edge Society like it was some sort of a cult, but nothing could have been further from the truth. I tried to provide people with guidance and direction so that they could go out and be independent and successful on their own the way I am. I didn't want mindless followers, but that's what I got, and I grew tired of it.

Bill Meltzer: You still haven't answered the main question: How would you account for your poor showings against Mysterio, Big Show, and Kane?

Punk: I don't know how much clearer I can make it. I started spending too much time worrying about trying to reach out to others and not enough on myself. I didn't go into

EVERY ISSUE, REPORTERS FROM PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED WILL PARTICIPATE IN AN INCISIVE PRESS CONFERENCE WITH A TOP WRESTLING STAR. THE QUESTIONS WILL BE DEMANDING. AND THE ANSWERS WILL REVEAL THE INNERMOST THOUGHTS OF THE GIANTS OF THE SPORT

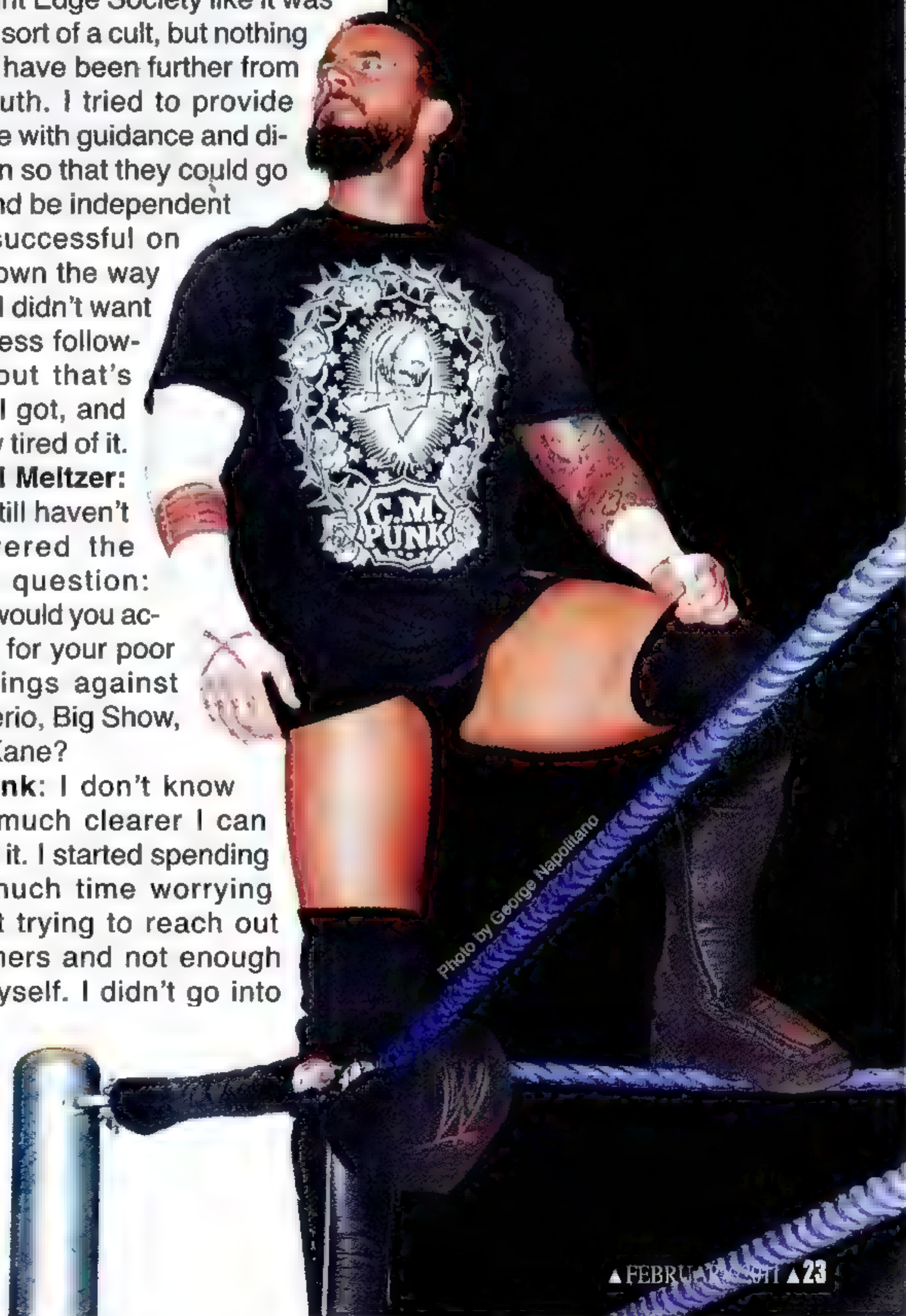


Photo by George Napolitano



The "Straight Edge Superstar" said he was just trying to guide a few lost souls in Gallows, Joey Mercury, and Serena (above), not start a cult. But, when he spent too much time on them, and not enough on himself, Punk gave each member a swift kick (below) and sent them on their way.



the matches with the right mindset, which is to win matches for competitive reasons and not as a way to show others the light. The people I embraced ended up being a detriment to me, and their interference in matches I had well-in-hand cost me in the end. It was a lesson learned by me. Okay? Now let's move on.

Brock: I find it fascinating that you think your biggest problem is that you weren't self-centered enough. Everyone else sees you as a guy who developed a God complex about himself and did everything for his own ego and self-aggrandizement, to the near ruin of everyone who followed him. Need I remind you that you spent much of the year trying in vain to recruit unwilling people like Mysterio into your group? Need I remind you that you used some of the most despicable tactics imaginable, like picking on Mysterio's little girl to get to him? Explain that to me, and then we'll move on.

Punk: Tough love, that's all it ever was. But once again, my motivations get twisted by people like you from something pure into something evil. Sometimes people need to be saved from themselves.

Krewda: So who is going to save C.M. Punk from himself? Even using your own logic, if you have a tendency to get overly involved with other wrestlers' careers and lives, how do you reestablish the focus on winning one-on-one rather than backed by a faction?

Punk: C.M. Punk will save C.M. Punk from himself. In fact, I already have. I took a good, hard look at the things I was doing when I was reigning atop Smackdown, and ECW, and, before that, the indies. I realized what I needed to get back to doing.

Meltzer: Care to share?

Punk: Sure. When I was collecting title belts, I was focused on the titles and the titles alone. I was opportunistic, too, which is just a reality of what you need to

do both in and out of the ring in this day and age. When I was at the top, I rejected everyone and everything. I talked about the superiority of the few people who can truly live straight edge, but when the bell rang, my focus was on the match and not my ideology. So I've started to get back to that mindset.

Krewda: So have we seen the end of you working in alliance with other wrestlers?

Punk: For now, at least. The only thing I'm focused on now is regaining my spot atop WWE. So that means no tag teams for a while, unless it's a one-shot deal kind of thing. That means I don't want people at ringside who are ostensibly trying to help me but, in reality, are so incompetent that I have to worry about what they're doing as well as what my opponent is doing.

Brock: Does it also mean an end to your "Savior" rants and verbal harangues that last longer than your actual matches?

Punk: If you mean will I stop speaking the truth, absolutely not. But I can understand why someone whose longtime best friends are Jim Beam and Joe Camel would want to see me muzzle myself, or at least tone down the message so that you can blissfully avoid facing the reality of your failed life. I will never stop being outspoken about the things I believe in. If I did that, I couldn't live with myself.

Meltzer: Will you try to make amends with the fans? Not all that long ago, you were one of the most popular performers in the business. You've alienated a lot of people since then.

Punk: Isn't that sad? Sad that by holding myself up as a role model against people who pop pills and drink themselves into a stupor and otherwise exist—not live, mind you, but exist—in a chemical-induced coma, I'm the one who is supposedly in the wrong. It's sad that people wallow in their own misery and ignorance. Those sorts of attitudes are what led me to separate myself from the system in the first place.



Punk has found that killer instinct that once had him at the top of the wrestling world. Punk had no problem taking his frustrations out on Evan Bourne, who is now sidelined with a torn rotator cuff thanks to a C.M. Punk beating.

What do I need to make amends for? Nothing.

Krewda: How long do you think it will take you to work your way back into contention for one of the two top WWE titles? Right now, you seem to be right in the middle of the pack.

Punk: Look, whether you love me

or hate me, I'm a three-time world champion. I'm a two-time winner of the WrestleMania Money in the Bank ladder match. I was an ECW champion and had countless titles in the indies. I've long since proven myself. It's only a matter of time until I'm back on top. If you don't believe me, just wait and see. □

A CHOKER? NOT

DANIEL BRYAN

How His Success Could Change WWE Forever!

Text By Harry Burkett

VINCE McMAHON'S SINGLE-MINDEDNESS of purpose made WWE a phenomenon. But, after 25 years, someone has finally convinced McMahon to change his fundamental approach to the business. It wasn't Linda McMahon. Not Stephanie McMahon. Nor was it Triple-H, Michael Hayes, Dusty Rhodes, or Brian Gewirtz.

It was Daniel Bryan.

Promotional rivals such as Ted Turner, Paul Heyman, and Jim Crockett challenged McMahon's vision of what wrestling should be. Insiders



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Many were shocked to see the return of Daniel Bryan in the main event for SummerSlam. It was truly the first sign that McMahon had begun to listen to the outcry from the WWE Universe.

such as Pat Patterson, Bill Watts, Jim Cornette, and Vince Russo argued for this direction or that direction—showbiz vs. old school, raunch vs. family fare—while jockeying for solid ground in the shifting sands of fad and pop culture at any given time.

The success of Bryan could make more of an impact on WWE than the exploits or opinions of any of those individuals.

Consider the recent successes of this very unconventional WWE superstar: his triumphant return to WWE at SummerSlam, his victory over former mentor The Miz for the U.S. title, his win over Miz and John Morrison in a three-way submissions-count-anywhere battle at Hell in a Cell. We'd even include his losing effort against Sheamus on the October 11 edition of *Raw*. No star has executed such a scintillating offense, combining stiff kicks and submission-style grappling, against the former WWE champ.

And Vince wouldn't have approved Richard Wagner's "Ride Of The Valkyries" as an entrance theme for just anyone.

Yet don't mistake this for the typical "Vince finally accepts little guys" analysis. As much as McMahon's critics will vehemently deny it, the WWE CEO has been going

in this direction for a long time, dating back to his grand reception for Chris Jericho back in 1999 and carrying through Jericho's 2001 undisputed world championship victory and his five additional WWE and World title reigns. McMahon heartily pushed The Radicals—Chris Benoit, Eddie Guerrero, Dean Malenko, and Perry Saturn—when they jumped from WCW to the WWF in 2000, doing more with those talented cruiserweights in five months than WCW had done in five years. In 2004, Benoit and

Guerrero went on to heralded WWE and World heavyweight title victories, respectively, before their premature deaths—and the circumstances of those tragedies—permanently tarnished those feel-good stories.

And one doesn't have to look any further than C.M. Punk, the personification of everything that contradicts the WWE superstar prototype, who has reigned as World heavyweight champion on three occasions. His recent trade from Smackdown to Raw poises him for continued success in 2011.

It is true that Bryan's success is a vindication of substance over size, athleticism over charisma, and ground-and-pound over the "WWE" style. In an era when Creative is vainly devising gimmicks to develop originality, Bryan's blend of tenacity, talent, and understated confidence makes him unique in a WWE Universe where the powers-that-be consider old school to be only a quaint diversion offered by WWE Classics.

Bryan's success is really an indication of something much deeper. "I don't want to get into a psychoanalysis of Vince McMahon, because I think he's been analyzed more than George Steinbrenner, in



Just because he was given the opportunity from McMahon doesn't mean Bryan had an easy road. At Night of Champions he was on his own as he defeated The Miz to earn his first U.S. championship.

terms of his motivations and how his personal prejudices have affected his business," commented longtime WWE analyst Thomas Pilliard. "But I think his embrace of Daniel Bryan shows a certain maturity on McMahon's part. I suppose even McMahon can exhibit some adult wisdom at 65 years of age."

Continued Pilliard, "Let's face it. Bryan's personality and look are bland. Plus he's small. When's the last time someone was pushed to this extent without spending years in the WWE farm system or having a solid gimmick? What's next—an '80s-style ring jacket?"

Good point. Former Ring of Honor stars such as Brian Kendrick, Paul London, and Jamie Noble were relegated to either the tag team or cruiserweight ranks. London and Noble were thought to be too plain to deserve strong pushes. WWE Creative quickly soured on Kendrick's brief main-event dalliance. So why is McMahon wise to push Bryan? What makes this situation different?

"Vince bringing back Daniel Bryan following his release in June was significant for WWE," noted Pilliard. "Remember, WWE released Bryan because he had strangled Justin Roberts with his own tie, an act thought to be too violent for PG TV."

But I think Vince noticed the outcry not only on Facebook, but also on his own WWE Universe message boards. He began to rethink Bryan's importance to the company, and—for the first time in about 40 years—he recognized the collective wisdom of the fans."

That was the turning point. McMahon realized the masses are actually intelligent! Maybe he now appreciates that the WWE Universe is populated by lawyers,

teachers, and professionals of all trades and walks of life. And even those fans who aren't college graduates were at least schooled in professional wrestling from an early age, thanks mostly to McMahon's impact on that generation. The WWE Universe doesn't consist of marks to be hoodwinked. They're seasoned and respectable fans who no longer need Bastion Booger eating a WWE ice cream bar to keep them entertained. They've been influenced by MMA. They're all grown up and were ready for a Daniel Bryan to come along.

Most of those who inhabit the WWE Universe are also quite familiar with the outside world. After all, ROH, Pro Wrestling Guerrilla, and all the independent news sites are only a click away. In the 1980s, it was possible for even a former NWA World champion like Dusty Rhodes to walk into the WWF and for a portion of the fans to have no idea who he was. That's impossible

today. Most WWE fans—the ones over 10 years old, anyway—were fully aware of Bryan Danielson's exploits around the globe.

Couldn't this be a swerve? Vince has often played the role of Lucy with the football, snatching talented wrestlers from the promise of stardom just to tweak the "smart fans."

"Today, all fans are 'smart' fans," said Pilliard, whose own professional experience now transcends the print media into the social networking realm. "They're not the same obnoxious crowd that pined for Billy Kidman in the late-'90s. Here's a key example of Vince's recognition of this: He's allowed Michael Cole to become the voice of the status quo, pushing for the WWE prototypes and snobbishly dismissing the Internet. He always sets up guys like Cole to play the fools. I'd rather be on Bryan's side than Cole's side!"

Keep snickering, Cole. Daniel Bryan just might be the future of your company. □



Bryan has been allowed to showcase what has made him famous throughout the world of independent wrestling. From his strong kicks (left) to his unmatched submission wrestling ability (below), the WWE Universe has been exposed to a whole new style through Bryan.





RING OF

★ **ROLLER**

"We're At Our Best When"

HONOR

COASTER ★

"Everything Looks The Worst"

TEXT BY AL CASTLE
PHOTOS BY SCOTT FINKELSTEIN

GOING INTO RING of Honor's big September 11 show in New York City, a familiar cloud of uncertainty hung over the gritty wrestling promotion. Its popular booker had just been fired. Its top star had been signed away by WWE. And its reserve of potential main-event talent appeared to be dwindling.



It's not uncommon to see ROH owner Cary Silkin roaming around the venue before, during, and after shows. Here he checks in on his merchandise table, just to make sure everyone is doing his part.

With so many questions looming about the future of ROH, fans packed the Manhattan Center in record numbers to have them answered. In fact, so packed did the building get that the local fire marshal showed up and turned away dozens of ticket-holding fans.

The pressure was on for ROH to deliver in a big way, and prove to its loyal fan base that the Philadelphia-based wrestling company started nine years ago by a small VHS retail company still had plenty to offer.

And did it ever.

Over the next four hours, ROH's dedicated cast of performers put on a show that many witnesses praised as the best all-around wrestling event of the year. And by the end of the night, ROH had delivered a climax to its most personal rivalry, a returning former main-eventer, a commitment by one of its top stars to stick around for a while, a new tag team act with a world-class reputation, and

even a new ROH champion.

"It's always nice when a plan comes together," said ROH owner Cary Silkin, who roamed the stands throughout the standing-room-only crowd that night, beaming like a proud father as the action unfolded in the ring. "It showed that people are still interested in seeing Ring of Honor and real, quality pro wrestling."

And Silkin ROH's recipe for success—superior wrestling and fresh talent—has allowed the company to stay afloat even after having stories of its demise penned on a regular basis. And never did the dire predictions seem more realistic leading up to Glory by Honor. Each week seemed to bring one bit of bad news after another.

First came word that Adam Pearce, who had headed ROH's creative efforts since 2008, had been fired due to differences with other members of ROH's management team over the company's

directions. In an interview with *Inside Wrestling* (Volume 36, 2010), Pearce even predicted that one day Silkin would reach into his pockets to try to keep ROH in business "and there's not going to be anything left."

ROH suffered another potentially devastating blow when news surfaced that its reigning champion, Tyler Black, had signed a WWE contract. Making matters worse, the most obvious heir to Black's throne as the company's top attraction, Davey Richards, had already announced he intended to retire from wrestling by the end of 2010. And the company's other main-event singles competitor, Roderick Strong, got a tryout match with TNA.

Despite the string of setbacks, Silkin said he was never seriously concerned about the future of Ring of Honor—in part because the company had overcome similar obstacles so many times before. Just a year earlier, ROH lost its two

We Love
ROH
Wrestling

SHELTON RULZ!!!!

Ring of Honor has always been grateful to its fans and does all it can to produce the best show. And the fans make sure to show their thanks for the effort.

top stars, Bryan Danielson (WWE's Daniel Bryan) and Nigel McGuinness (TNA's Desmond Wolfe) on the very same night.

He noted that it was the departures of Danielson and McGuinness that opened the door for the creation of new main-event talent like Black and Richards. Silkin expects much the same will happen again, and named Kenny King and Eddie Edwards among the young stars who may be called upon to fill slots at the top of the cards.

"We've just got to get used to

the fact that guys are going to leave, move on to other companies, and try to advance their careers," he said.

Nothing appeared to come of Strong's tryout match with TNA, and in fact, the "Master Of The Backbreaker" went on to defeat Black to capture the ROH championship at Glory by Honor.

Also on the show, it was announced that Richards had a

change of heart, and had committed to another year with ROH. What's more, former ROH champion Homicide, fresh from his TNA release, returned to the company to challenge for Strong's title.

And there were many more reasons, coming out of Glory by Honor, to be optimistic about ROH's future. Former WWE tag team champions Charlie Haas and Shelton Benjamin got a heroes' reception for their ROH debut, and have since signed on for more dates with the company. And the nine-month rivalry between El Generico and Kevin Steen got hotter than ever after Steen unmasked his former partner following a brutal chain match at the show.

The widespread praise for the show served as a vote of confidence for ROH's new booker, Hunter "Delirious" Johnson.

A RIVALRY EVOLVES

Ring of Honor has faced some competition for independent wrestling fans' dollars ever since former ROH booker Gabe Sapolsky helped launch Dragon Gate USA and EVOLVE Wrestling last year. But never was that competition more apparent than on September 11.

On that day, both ROH and EVOLVE hosted arguably the biggest events in their respective histories—just 20 miles from each other.

EVOLVE 5 in Rahway, New Jersey, was headlined by Bryan Danielson taking on Munenori Sawa and a women's dream match pitting Mercedes Martinez against Amazing Kong. ROH's Glory by Honor IX in New York City featured Tyler Black in his last ROH title defense against Roderick Strong and the ROH debut of Charlie Haas and Shelton Benjamin.

But rather than try to one-up each other, the two promotions instead worked together to appease as many fans as possible. EVOLVE moved its start time up to 4 p.m., gave discounts to ROH ticketholders, and even arranged to have a shuttle bus take fans from the Rahway Recreation Center to the

Manhattan Center.

"The most important thing is that I believe a number of fans were able to attend both shows and make it a truly memorable day of wrestling," Sapolsky said. "I think the more variety there is for the fans, the more excitement there is. It's like McDonalds and Burger King, Pepsi and Coke, Apple and PCs."

The synergy between ROH and its closest competitors appeared to grow in the fall, when DGUSA announced it was working with ROH's Internet pay-per-view distributor, gofightlive.tv, for an online pay-per-view of its own. DGUSA and EVOLVE also recently signed Austin Aries for a number of matches while he was on hiatus from ROH.



Danielson vs. Sawa topped the EVOLVE card



The debut of Shelton Benjamin and Charlie Haas has given a kick-start to ROH by adding instantaneous star power to a roster many thought had taken some backbreaking hits.



Indeed, beginning in the fall of 2010, the buzz surrounding ROH was louder than it had been in a long time, and it was reflected in ROH's business. More people purchased the live Internet stream of Glory by Honor than any of the ROH's three previous online pay-per-views. Soon after the show, Silkin also announced that ROH had secured deals to air its weekly television show in several new international markets. ROH's relationship with its cable television partner, HDNet, also appeared to strengthen, as Silkin said he was in talks with the Mark Cuban-owned network to broadcast a live special or

even produce a televised pay-per-view event.

Still, Silkin concedes that ROH still has a steep hill to climb in remaining a viable player in the national wrestling scene, and that means making some tough choices. ROH has reduced its touring schedule considerably—focusing on just a couple of shows a month in its biggest markets. The company has also cut back on using some talent, including such big names as two-time ROH champion Austin Aries.

"Everybody is feeling the pinch of the economy," said Silkin, who added that the door is open for Aries to return in the future. "Sure,

Silkin feels that it is times like this, when the roster hits a transition period, that new stars are given a real chance to shine. He names Kenny King, seen here against ROH staple Jay Briscoe, as one of those up-and-coming stars.



we'd like to have more people at the shows and have a packed house at every show and be selling tons of DVD, but we've made it through the worst times, and at the moment I feel like things are really good. I'm starting to believe that we're at our best when things seem their worst."

Still, no matter how many world-class wrestlers it creates, how many Match of the Year candidates it puts on, or how many fire marshals' offices are called, Silkin fully expects some naysayers to keep counting ROH down—and for ROH to keep getting back up.

"Some people will always want to say we're done, but that's okay," Silkin said with a laugh. "Maybe when they're coming to the 20th anniversary show, then they'll stop." □

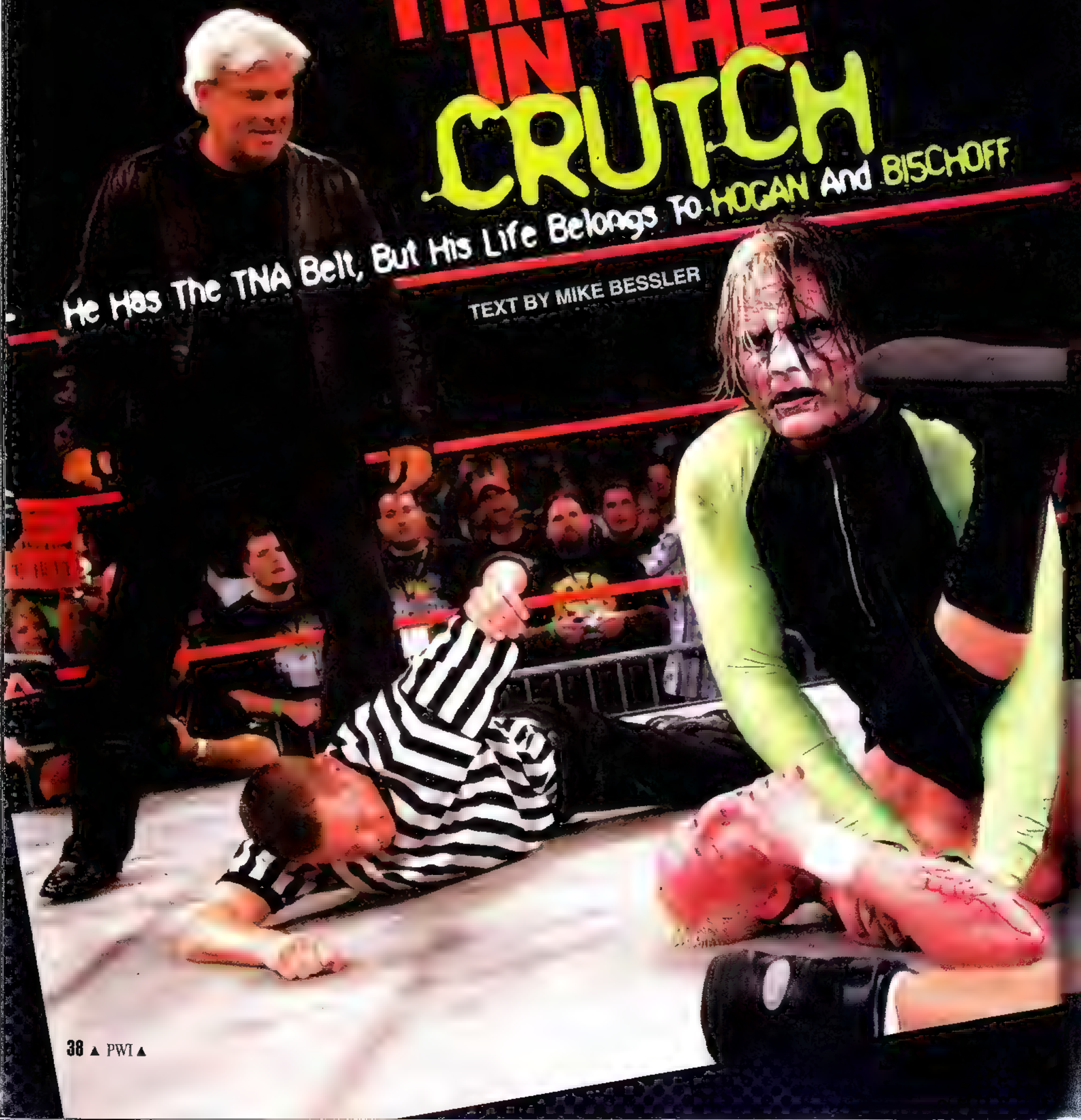
Glory by Honor IX saw the Steen/Generico feud reach a new level of intensity (above) and the return of Homicide (below), who jumped right back into the thick of things by challenging new ROH champion Roderick Strong.



HARDY COMES THROUGH IN THE CRUTCH

He Has The TNA Belt, But His Life Belongs To HOGAN And BISCHOFF

TEXT BY MIKE BESSLER



IT IS SAID the forces that drive men the most are greed, hunger, and the need for power. Perhaps no one can better attest to this than the TNA World champion, Jeff Hardy.

Known throughout his career as a high-flying risk-taker, "The Charismatic Enigma" defeated Mr. Anderson and Kurt Angle to capture the TNA World title at Bound for Glory. However, Hardy's triumph was tainted—achieved not only through athleticism and determination, but also through agenda-driven opportunism and some good, old-fashioned betrayal. And though Hardy ultimately achieved the end he sought, the means he employed to do it could end up affecting him for a long time, in some very unpleasant ways.

The possibility that Hardy, a four-time world champion, might ultimately walk away from Bound for Glory as the new TNA champion was certainly a plausible outcome for the much-anticipated triple-threat match. The bout itself was a solid, hard-hitting affair with none of the three combatants gaining a clear advantage over the others.

It was at a critical juncture—a moment in which all three competitors and the referee lay incapacitated to one extent or another—that everything changed.

The arrival of Eric Bischoff at ringside signaled the beginning of a bizarre chain of events. Armed with a folding chair and a host of bad intentions, Bischoff stood ready to abuse the motionless competitors.

Fresh from back surgery, Hulk Hogan made a dramatic and surprising entrance of his own, walking with the aid of crutches to confront Bischoff in earnest. The two titans of TNA stood face to face in the ring, and a full-on conflagration seemed imminent.

Bischoff jettisoned his folding chair and seized one of Hogan's crutches as each man prepared to crown the other in grand fashion.

Hardy, having recovered from a hard landing outside the ring, intervened in the standoff, stepping between Hogan and Bischoff in what initially appeared as an attempt to curtail an all-out brawl between them. Taking

Hogan's crutch, Hardy squared off with Bischoff, ostensibly volunteering to take on "Easy-E."

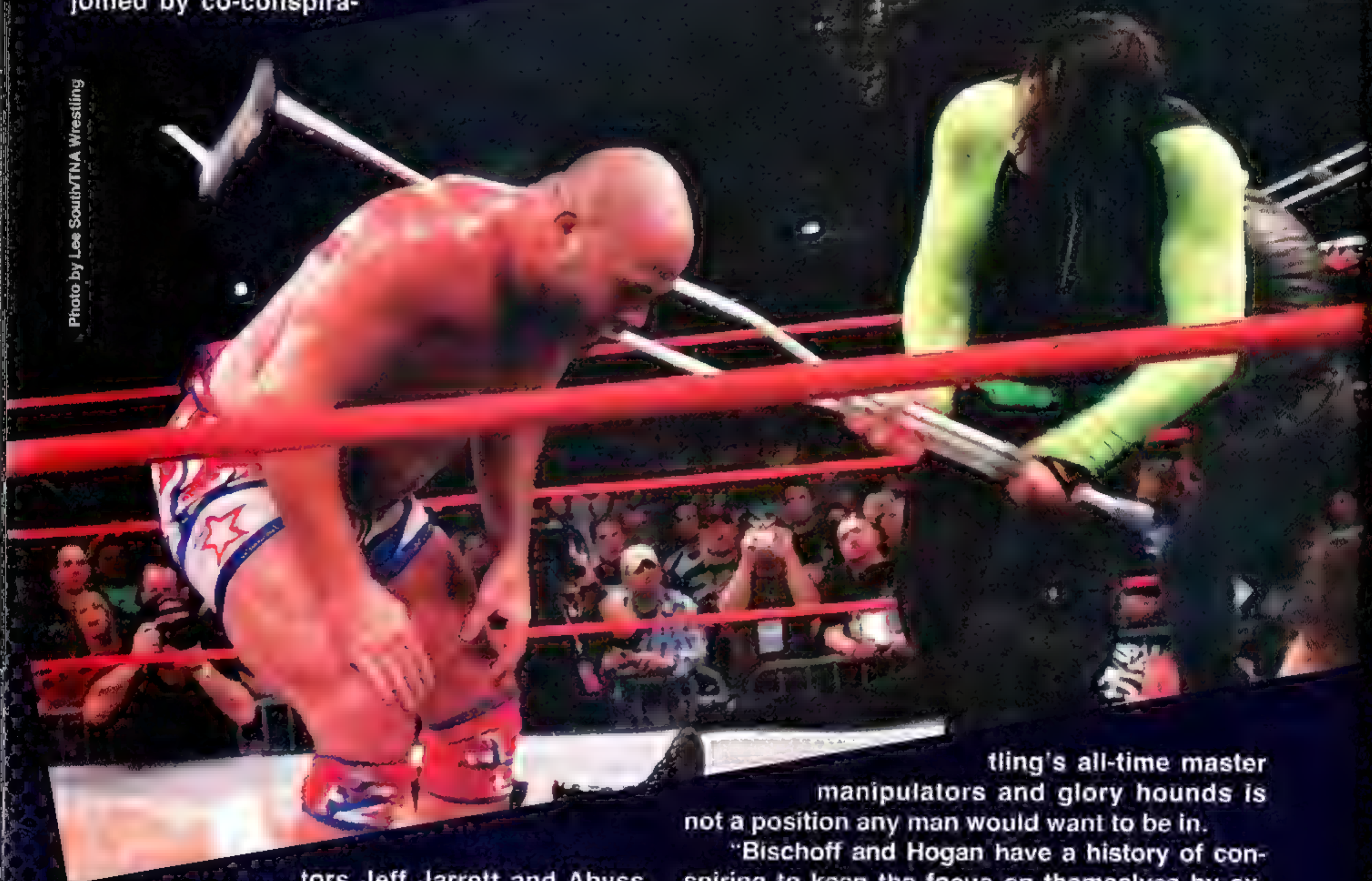
Then, in the words of Shakespeare, the worm turned.

Turning his attention from Hogan and Bischoff, Hardy used each of Hogan's crutches as weapons, delivering crushing blows to both Angle and Anderson, preventing the men from competing any further in the title match. Hogan and Bischoff subsequently showed their mutual approval by declaring Hardy the winner of the championship bout.

With both foes vanquished, the contest was over. Hardy, flanked by two new and powerful allies in Hogan and Bischoff, and joined by co-conspira-

"Immortal," as Hogan and Bischoff call their fledgling super-team, presents Hardy with incalculable opportunities ... and an exceptional degree of personal and professional risk. Sure, Hardy has the TNA World title, but he is forever beholden to Hogan and Bischoff. By helping Hardy win the belt, they've put him in their debt. And being indebted to two of wres-

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling



tors Jeff Jarrett and Abyss, hoisted the TNA World title in celebration. The coup was complete. "They" revealed themselves, as fans in Daytona Beach's Ocean Center reeled in shock and disbelief.

Yet, as the dust settles following the events of 10-10-10, it's Jeff Hardy more than anyone else who faces difficult questions and a harsh new reality. As Hardy fends off challenges from the likes of Rob Van Dam, Mr. Kennedy, and a host of other heavyweights, he also stands mired in a virtual snake pit of intrigue and double-dealing. Bluntly speaking, by winning the championship the way he did, the 33-year-old champion has surrounded himself with veteran "allies" who are notoriously self-centered and unpredictable.

... tling's all-time master manipulators and glory hounds is not a position any man would want to be in.

"Bischoff and Hogan have a history of conspiring to keep the focus on themselves by exploiting the careers of the men they associate with," explained TNA play-by-play announcer Mike Tenay. "Ever hear of a group called the NWO?"

Hardy, who is no doubt familiar with the NWO as well as Hogan's and Bischoff's predilection for treachery, clearly made a value judgment that the benefits of being a member of "They" would outweigh the perils of such an association.

"It's all about taking chances," shrugged a dour and unapologetic Hardy. "I was just sick and tired of watching everyone else live out my dreams. The wisdom and guidance offered by Eric and Hulk made it that much easier for me to seize the moment."

Sure enough, Hardy has some new and powerful friends. At the same time, he's earned

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

Though he had wrestled both Kurt Angle (opposite page) and Mr. Anderson (below) to a stalemate at Bound for Glory, Hardy decided Hulk Hogan's crutches gave him a better shot at victory, and used them to batter his opponents.

the ire and contempt of many of his peers. "Jeff needs to grow some eyes in the back of his head," growled Mr. Anderson. "Once I take his title, those fair-weather friends of his will be in short supply. And will I feel sorry for him? Don't bet on it."

Getting to Hardy may prove difficult, though, as Hogan and Bischoff continue to expand their power and influence throughout TNA. A formidable faction in and of itself, Immortal appears to have bolstered its star power and muscle through an alliance with Ric Flair's Fortune.

It seems the TNA champ is well protected. And that is exactly how Bischoff and Hogan want him to feel ... for now. They want Hardy relaxed and confident in their friendship so that he raises no objections when they inevitably pressure him to do

their bidding, whether that means lying down for an opponent, attacking enemies of Immortal, or perhaps even handing over the TNA World title to Hogan outright.

If Hogan and Bischoff stay true to form, and attempt to exert control over the heretofore fiercely independent Hardy, it could be just a matter of weeks before Jeff is shut out of the group altogether.

Maybe then Hardy will think twice before trading his soul for a gold belt.

Hardy appears to be walking down the same path once traveled by Randy Savage, who, as an early recruit to Bischoff's and Hogan's NWO, soon found himself being used by the group, then marginalized and discarded.

Hardy sits aloft the shoulders of his new Immortal compatriots after winning the title, while fans litter the ring with trash. As a member of TNA's latest faction, negative fan reaction could be just one of many problems for "The Charismatic Enigma."

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

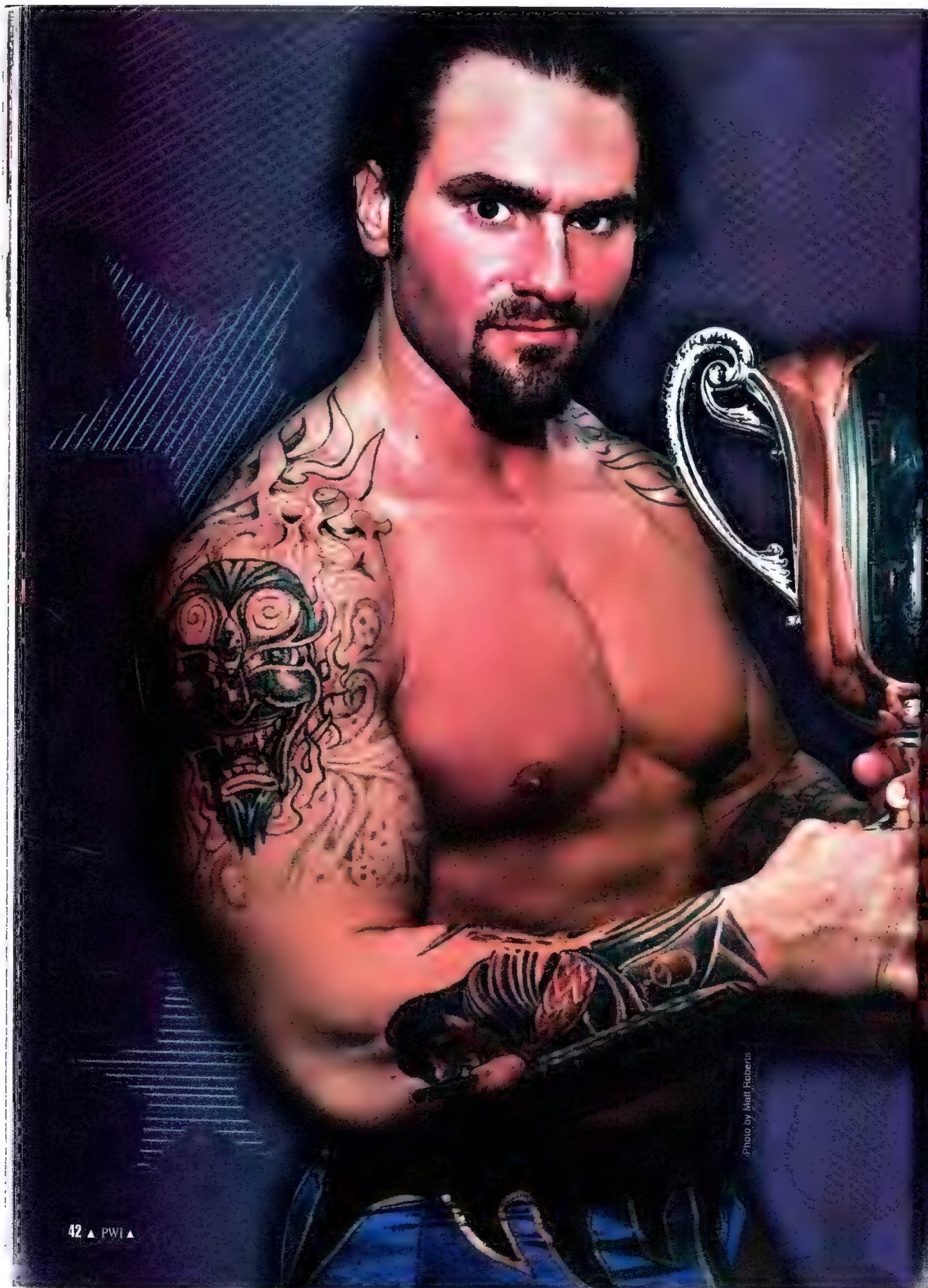


Photo by Matt Roberts

NWA FUTURE LEGEND CUP WINNER

PHILL SHATTER

"I'm Flattered, But I Still Have a Long Way to Go"

TEXT BY AL ALVEN

PHILL SHATTER ISN'T exactly the sentimental type. Someday, he figures, there will be plenty of time to reminisce about his accomplishments, to relive his favorite matches, and to count the title belts and trophies on his mantle. For now, though, there remains but one goal: to become the NWA heavyweight champion. Anything short of fulfilling that goal equates to failure in Shatter's eyes.

This probably explains Shatter's subdued demeanor following his victory over Davey Richards in the final round of the Future Legends Cup tournament at NWA Fanfest 2010 in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Shatter's post-match reaction—or lack thereof—impressed more than a few of the all-time greats on hand to witness the event.

"I'd expect a young guy like Phill to be hooting and hollering and calling people out," noted Tully Blanchard, who presented Shatter with the Future Legends Cup. "But this kid graciously accepted the trophy, tucked it under his arm, and walked to the back. No hoopla. He shook hands with me, with Jimmy Snuka, Terry Funk, and a bunch of people that he probably should have been in awe of. Snuka, of all people, pointed out how intense Shatter is. I mean, what does that tell you?"

It should tell the wrestling world all it needs to know about Shatter's

focus, nevermind his hulking 6'2", 250-pound frame, uncanny athleticism, and ever-growing list of accomplishments.

For starters, the 28-year-old Hickory, North Carolina, native is in the midst of a seemingly never-ending reign as NWA National champion, having won the title from Crusher Hansen in January 2009.

A veteran of the Iraq war, the "Universal Soldier" remains one of the most feared competitors in Georgia-based NWA Anarchy, where he has held the company's top singles and tag-team titles.

Over the summer, Shatter gained exposure in TNA, where he appeared as Gunner, one-half of the company's security force with longtime friend/rival Murphy (Mikael Judas).

"I feel like I've made great strides over the past few years," he said. "I've wrestled around the country and traveled the world. I've learned a lot from my experiences and I'm ready to take that next step."

Shatter has made it very clear that he envisions that "next step" being a victory over current NWA heavyweight champion Adam Pearce, a man he has wrestled frequently over the past year, and

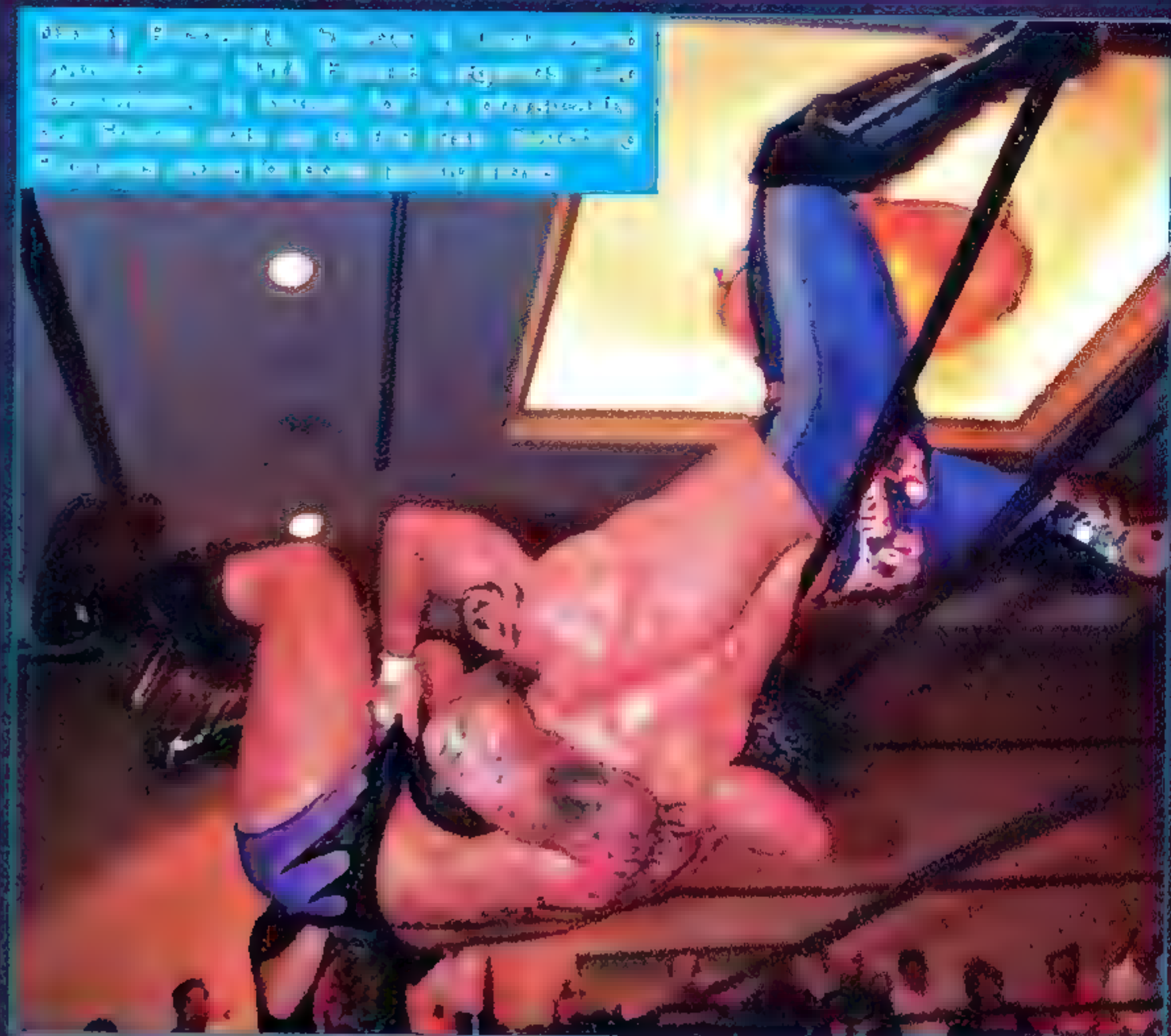


Photo by Christine Coons

the man who stands between Shatter and his ultimate accomplishment. And so while Shatter is genuinely honored and humbled to have captured the Future Legends Cup, he is also cautious not to get too satisfied with himself.

"Frankly, I'm more concerned about my career than my legacy at this point," he said. "I'm not

going to relax and start thinking of myself as some sort of legend, no matter what this trophy says. The important thing to me is that I won the tournament, and beat one of the very best in the game at the end in Davey Richards."

"He took me to the limit. It was one of the hardest-fought matches of my career, and when I have time to look back on it, I'm sure it'll be one of the ones I'll be most proud of," Shatter said.

Shatter and Richards had already competed earlier on the NWA Fanfest card, having defeated Chase Stevens and Caprice Coleman, respectively, in the tournament's semifinal round. That they went on to pound each other for nearly 25 minutes in one of the most physical matches of the year said a lot for their desire and conditioning.

At around the 20-minute mark, it looked as if Richards was rallying toward a win. After getting the better of Shatter in a slugfest, he nailed him with a missile dropkick, a German suplex, and a very impressive superplex. Shatter would not stay down, however. After escaping Richards' danger-



Photo by Christine Coons



[illegible]

ous variation of the anklelock. Shatter scored with a vicious clothesline and then finished Richards off with his trademark Post Traumatic Stress Disorder power bomb.

The crowd rose to its feet following the three-count, paying tribute to both men.

"Shatter is a warrior," said the highly regarded Richards, one of the most decorated wrestlers on the independent scene. "If I took him to the limit, I guess he took me beyond that point. My pride will not allow me to take a moral victory out of this, but I will say there is no shame in losing to a competitor of his caliber."¹²

Hall of Famer Terry Funk, a former NWA World champ, offered his unique perspective:

"All you have to do is look at his eyes to see the determination this kid has. I think he has the potential to go as far as he wants to."

It's that raw, intangible that many observers feel should have Pearce running scared. But Shatter knows all too well how cunning and crafty the current NWA kingpin is, and how difficult it will be to pry the title away from him.

Back in February, Shatter scored a huge victory when he pinned the then-titleless Pearce to retain the National championship.



One month later, he came oh-so-close to capturing the NWA title in a three-way between Pearce and the man who came into the match wearing the strap, Blue Demon Jr.

Pearce eliminated Demon early on, then took his chances with Shatter. With the prestigious title hanging in the balance, Pearce was able to get his shoulder up before the three-count after Shatter had brought him back in the ring with a suplex. The referee determined that both of Shatter's shoulders were down, thus making Pearce a three-time NWA champion.

In a rematch, Pearce held on to the title by getting himself disqualified. Undaunted, Shatter senses he is getting close and is doing his

best to keep things in perspective

"The bottom line is, until I'm able to beat Pearce and strap the NWA title around my waist, I will not be where I want to be," he said. "I still have a long way to go, but I'm going to get there. I was truly flattered by the congratulations I received from so many of my peers and the many wrestlers I grew up idolizing after winning the Future Legends Cup. I feel like I owe it to them, and myself, to up my game to another level. If anything, this has inspired me to reach new heights. I'm confident that the next time I step into the ring with Adam Pearce, it will be the end of his reign and the start of a brand new era."

Photo by George Napolitano





HOW TAG TEAM WRESTLING TURNED BIG SHOW INTO A SOLO JUGGERNAUT!

Q **UICK TRIVIA QUESTION** for you baseball fans out there: Can you name the two brothers who hold the Major League Baseball record for most home runs by a pair of siblings? You have to go back a few decades, and it's a little bit of a trick question. The answer is the Aaron brothers, Hank and Tommie, with 768. The trick part of that question is that Hank contributed 755 of the 768. Thanks for the 13, little bro.

The question could have gotten a little trickier had Barry Bonds, who set the all-time

home run record at 762 in his last season (2007), found a team for the 2008 season. Had he done so and whacked seven more home runs, you could have said Barry and his brother, Bobby Jr., held the record for two brothers. Bobby Jr. played pro ball for more than a decade but never reached the Major Leagues, but still, 769 plus 0 would have been more than 755 plus 13. (We didn't say both brothers had to have played Major League ball.)

In either case, it wouldn't exactly be considered a 50/50 partnership.

TEXT BY DAVE LENKER



Photos by George Napolitano

While Big Show excelled in tag teams with Chris Jericho (left) and The Miz (below), putting up with their me-first attitude and egos reminded him of what he was capable of achieving on his own.



Now that he's back on track toward singles success, Big Show need only look in the mirror—not at his partner—when things don't go his way.

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Now, basketball was The Big Show's game back in the day, but surely he has at least heard of "Hammerin'" Hank Aaron.

Given what has gone down with Show over the past year, he could probably relate to the comparison, especially the part about the Bonds brothers. We make that point because we recently asked him which tag team he'd pick as the best in WWE right now. His one-word response? "Me." You see, Show, as you should know, has become something of a tag team specialist, and it kind of happened accidentally. With a hiatus or two mixed in, he has been with WWE for nearly a dozen years, and even for a man of his ridiculous size, it's tough to keep coming up with new and exciting things for a guy to do and feuds for him to chew on.

When we pursued the question further with him, he expanded slightly on his answer. "Fine, me and any partner of my choosing," he said.

You understand what he means.

When the potential juggernaut of a team that was Edge and Chris Jericho collapsed due to Edge's injury last summer, Jericho needed a new partner to carry and defend the WWE tag team gold with him; Show got the nod.

Most of us groaned. Big Show? Really?

Well, JeriShow ended up being quite successful and quite entertaining. The big man-little man dynamic really worked for about five months, until they ran into DeGeneration-X in mid-December. We all know how poorly Jericho reacts to any kind of adversity. Pretty much blame someone else first and check the facts later. So that partnership didn't last much longer.

Enter The Miz. The big man-even littler man dynamic worked just as well there. ShowMiz captured WWE tag gold as well, even turned in a successful title defense at WrestleMania 26. But Miz handles failure about as well as Jericho, if not worse, and when they, too, lost the gold, Show wasn't about to take any guff from "His Awesomeness." He

happily kayoed the partnership into oblivion rather than listen to any whining.

Keep in mind that Jericho and Miz are both enormously talented superstars who contributed mightily to their respective partnerships with Show. It's only fair to point that out. That's just not necessarily how the big fella saw it. He looked at it like he could hold the tag belts with a cardboard cutout if given the chance. In fact, he might even prefer it that way. Cardboard cutouts are quiet and predictable. Anyway, Show started to see himself as a one-man tag team steamroller. Make fat jokes about him, he says. *Ha-ha-ha*. Go right ahead and tell him he's lazy ... and bald and ugly, too, maybe. Sticks and stones and you know the rest. Just do so at the risk

of incurring the wrath of the biggest, most dangerous man in WWE.

The behemoth's confidence and motivation are back.

How else can you explain his strategy in a feud with C.M. Punk and his Straight Edge Society this summer? To help him even the odds, he looked around and picked ... no one to help out. At one point, there were four of them, but he thought, *Four on one? Yeah, I think I like those odds.*

Handle it he did. Serena is now gone from WWE. Luke Gallows wasn't much of a problem. Joey Mercury no longer has a disguise under which he can hide. Punk no longer has hair on his head. And following a devastating one-on-three loss by the SES to Show at SummerSlam and a one-sided loss to the big man at Night of Champions, Punk, one of WWE's elite stars during the past two years, was left to regroup and re-evaluate.

Not that Show cared a whit about that. He was too busy basking in the glow of success and realizing just how dominant he can still be. Tag team gold

be damned—if he's so good one on four, why not go for the big prize, that shiny piece of hardware that was still wrapped around the thick waist of Kane as summer turned to fall? Sure, he has wrestled for that big belt in recent years, but only now does he seem to have real momentum behind him.

Interesting case, that Kane. Like Show, he has been in WWE seemingly forever (1997 to be exact) with hardly a break. His days as a serious contender to the World championship seemed buried deep in his past, too, until he shockingly won the Money in the Bank match this summer.

It was 2002 when Show last held the WWE title, although it feels more like 1992, if not 1982. Eight years is an eternity in wrestling. How long ago was that exactly? Well, consider that he won the belt from Brock Lesnar. And The Rock was less than a half-year removed from his last reign at the time.

At a time at which WWE is again searching for new headliners, one of the old ones has stepped up. Show wants to make it two—and he's swinging for the fences. □

Photo by George Napolitano



Lest anyone get the wrong idea, Big Show's single-handed dismantling of the Straight Edge Society at Summer Slam proved the big man needs nobody watching his back, even in handicap matches.

WHAT'S AHEAD FOR WRESTLING'S TOP STARS IN 2011?

SECTION COMPILED BY DAN MURPHY

FINANCIAL CONSULTANTS WILL caution would-be investors that past performance of a stock doesn't guarantee future results. Unpredictability is inherent in the stock market, and a variety of random variables could dramatically affect the overall performance of any investment.

The same can be said of pro wrestling. Injuries can shake up rosters. Ratings trends and pay-per-view buys can drastically change long-term plans. New signings, releases, and returns can create a ripple effect that influences an entire promotion.

Just as with the stock market, there is no magical crystal ball that allows us to peer into the misty future of wrestling and divine what's ahead. However, just like the stockbrokers on Wall Street, we can evaluate past performance of some of the sport's top stars and put together a series of educated guesses on what is to come in 2011.

The editors of *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* identified 25 of the top stars from WWE, TNA, and Ring of Honor. We factored in the past performance of each wrestler (or tag team) and the current climate within each organization, then speculated on what we should be able to expect from each, even going so far as to project where

they will rank in next year's "PWI 500" or "Female 50." For those wrestlers we evaluated in a similar feature last year, we reviewed how our predictions held up.

Of course, the unpredictable nature of wrestling can be seen in looking at everything that happened in TNA this year. When we wrote last year's "What's Ahead" predictions, Hulk Hogan and Eric Bischoff had not signed with TNA. Who could have predicted the Hogan regime, *Impact's* ill-fated move to Monday nights, the EV 2.0 extreme reunion, and Jeff Hardy's stunning heel turn and the formation of Hogan's Immortal?

There are some things that are impossible to predict, which is part of the unique allure of wrestling in the first place. As Vince McMahon has said many times, "anything can happen." But, based on the current environment and the performance trends of the wrestlers we have featured, we are confident that our predictions should hold up pretty well.

What does that mean? It means that Randy Orton is going to have a great year, that John Cena fans are going to be disappointed, that The Undertaker's streak is in jeopardy, and that Kurt Angle is going to be the man to beat in TNA. In other words, it means an exciting year in 2011.

WHAT'S AHEAD FOR KANE IN 2011?

Without question the past year has been the best year of Kane's career. Not only did he finally regain a world championship, but he also scored some definitive wins over The Undertaker.

Kane claims the events of the past year have all been part of an ingenious master plan that has taken more than a decade in the making. He claims that Undertaker finally showed signs of weakness during his match against Shawn Michaels at WrestleMania 26. Kane interpreted that so-called sign of weakness as the signal to launch his all-out war against the "Dead Man."

After convincing Paul Bearer to turn on Taker at Hell in a Cell, Kane certainly seems to have taken control of the feud. But we know better than to count The Undertaker out. The Undertaker does not lose feuds. Whenever he's beaten down, The Undertaker finds the power to sit up and fight with more power and passion.

Kane and The Undertaker are headed to a clash that can only leave one man standing in the end. This is a feud of epic proportions, one that promises to utterly change both men's careers.

When the final bell sounds, we predict it will be The Undertaker standing victorious. Kane has enjoyed the upper hand in their feud thus far, but Kane simply is not a Phenom. His career has been marred by upset losses, inconsistency, and underachievement, while The Undertaker adds to his Hall-of-Fame-caliber legacy with every passing year.

Whether it's a Buried Alive match, a casket match, or an inferno match, The Undertaker will get his vengeance on Kane. And Kane had better believe that Undertaker won't be showing him any mercy at all.

By early-2011—if not sooner—Undertaker will administer a severe beating to Kane, one that will

Photo by Duane Long



Matches vs. Mysterio were no cakewalk.

force Kane out of the ring to recuperate. If he's physically and emotionally able to return after that match, it most likely won't be until late in the year, and probably on a different brand than Undertaker. Chances are Kane will also want to hide his face in shame, so we may even see him back in a mask. He will spend 2011 wishing he never provoked The Undertaker.

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"Dissecting WrestleMania 26" (PWI, August 2010)

"WrestleMania 26: The Real Winners & Losers" (*The Wrestler Inside Wrestling*, Vol. 31, 2010)

"Four-Way Faceoff" (PWI, December 2010)

"The Choke's On You: Attacking Taker Will Cost Kane His Title And His Career" (PWI, December 2010)

"Greats of the Game" (PWI, January 2011)

2010 HIGHLIGHT: Kane's favorite moment had to be when he revealed that he was the person who put The Undertaker in a vegetative state.

2010 LOWLIGHT: Losing Fatal 4-Way qualifying matches to both C.M. Punk and Rey Mysterio Jr. on *Smackdown* over the summer.

HOW OUR 2010 PREDICTION HELD UP: Kane was not included in last year's forecast issue.

2011 PROJECTED PWI 500™ RANKING: Not ranked due to lengthy injury.



WHAT'S AHEAD FOR RANDY ORTON IN 2011?

Randy Orton climbed back into position as Raw's top dog last year. It was a long climb back to the top, though, as Orton needed to scuttle Legacy and fight his way to the championship without lackeys there to help him.

Orton beat Cody Rhodes and Ted DiBiase Jr. at WrestleMania 26. He wisely avoided feuding with them and set his sights on the WWE championship. And, for the first time since 2005, he regained the support of the fans. In fact, the man voted *PWI's* Most Hated Wrestler of the Year in 2009 became arguably the most popular star on Raw by mid-year.

Orton showed a newfound patience and maturity in 2010. After moving past Rhodes and DiBiase, he battled with Edge to earn a title shot. Again, he kept his eye on the prize and avoided a lengthy feud with the "Rated R Superstar." When he finally got into the ring with Sheamus, the feisty Celt often relied on intentional DQs to save his title.

The old Orton would have reacted to Sheamus' subterfuge with rage. He would have come unglued, which was exactly what Sheamus was counting on. Instead, Orton kept his cool, and at Night of Champions, he outlasted five other challengers to earn his sixth WWE championship.

Orton has already proven himself against most of Raw's top stars, but over the past few years, he has been his own worst enemy. His fiery temper has created problems, both inside and out of the ring. He

sabotaged his own success with his inability to control his emotions. But it finally looks like Orton has learned to channel that inner rage. Instead of blindly attacking anyone in his path and throwing temper tantrums after every setback, he has found his focus.

A focused Orton is a very dangerous man. He is in position to wear the WWE title for most of 2011. The turbulent nature of WWE championship matches and the grueling schedule of a champion will likely prevent him from enjoying one lengthy title reign. But, it's very likely that he may win the belt two to three times more before year's end.



"The Viper" in full armor

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Feud of the Year (*PWI*, March 2010)
Most Hated Wrestler of the Year (*PWI*, March 2010)
Wrestler of the Year (*PWI*, March 2010)
Report Card (*PWI*, July 2010)
"Dissecting WrestleMania 26" (*RAW*, August 2010)
"He'll Never Admit It, But... Randy Orton Needs Your Cheers" (*The Wrestler/Inside Wrestling*, Vol. 34, 2010)
"WrestleMania 26: The Real Winners & Losers" (*The Wrestler/Inside Wrestling*, Vol. 34, 2010)
"War Of The Decades" (*PWI*, September 2010)
"Best Of The Best" (*The Wrestler/Inside Wrestling*, Vol. 35, 2010)
Wrestling Timeline (*The Wrestler/Inside Wrestling*, Vol. 35, 2010)
"Four-Way Faceoff" (*PWI*, December 2010)
"Randy Orton vs. John Cena: *PWI's* Special '50 Category Analysis'" (*PWI*, February 2011)

2010 HIGHLIGHT: Winning the Six-Pack Challenge match for the WWE championship at Night of Champions.

2010 LOWLIGHT: Losing to World champion Jack Swagger in an Extreme Rules match for the World title at the Extreme Rules pay-per-view.

HOW OUR 2010 PREDICTION HELD UP: We predicted that Orton would recruit new members into Legacy and rely on them to regain the championship. Instead, he did it alone.

2011 PROJECTED *PWI* 500 RANKING



WHAT'S AHEAD FOR ROB VAN DAM IN 2011?

After three-plus years chilling at home, Rob Van Dam made a triumphant return this year. Shortly after making his TNA debut, he won the World title from AJ Styles. RVD seemed happy, and who could blame him? He was an instantaneous main-eventer who received a World title shot after barely a half-dozen matches in the company. When he won the belt, it was like a coronation, complete with confetti and a big pat on the back from Hulk Hogan himself.

Unfortunately for RVD, it didn't take long for the good times to turn ugly. Van Dam was on the receiving end of a savage beating from Abyss, and by the time he could get revenge, TNA's entire political landscape had been turned upsidedown.

This, however, isn't the TNA Van Dam signed up for. Suddenly, Hogan, Eric Bischoff, and Jeff Jarrett are heading a heel stable and Dixie Carter is on the outside looking in.

RVD has made it clear that while he enjoys wrestling, he doesn't need to wrestle. He isn't ruled by the same obsessions that drive Jarrett, Ric Flair, and Kurt Angle. He wrestles simply because he enjoys it.

We can't help but wonder just how much Van Dam will enjoy wrestling in a company run by the new Hogan/Bischoff/Jarrett regime, the very same group that orchestrated Abyss' attack on him.

Unless he turns his back on his fans and joins Team Hogan—which is not likely—Van Dam will spend most of 2011 battling the odds, especially now that Bischoff has planted the notion in RVD's mind that a member of EV2.0 will betray him.

The laidback, happy-go-lucky RVD will struggle to survive in the current TNA. To do so, he'll either have to develop a killer instinct or simply walk away.



Photo by Lee Smith/TNA Wrestling

Can RVD rise above TNA politics in 2011?

Right now, Van Dam wants revenge on Abyss and Jeff Hardy, and that will drive him for a while. But outside interference and political maneuverings from Bischoff, and more gang-style attacks will drive Van Dam to frustration.

That frustration will likely compel him to take some time off and reassess his priorities. RVD should start 2011 as TNA's top babyface, but by year's end, we expect he'll be wrestling sporadically, if at all.

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"Countdown To A Superfeud: A Hardy-RVD Showdown Is Inevitable" (*The Wrestler/Inside Wrestling*, Vol. 34, 2010)

"War Of The Decades" (*PWI*, September 2010)

"Best Of The Best" (*The Wrestler/Inside Wrestling*, Vol. 35, 2010)

"Hot Dam! After 20 Years, RVD Is Better Than Ever" (*The Wrestler/Inside Wrestling*, Vol. 35, 2010)

"Four-Way Faceoff" (*PWI*, December 2010)

"Wrestling Timeline" (*The Wrestler/Inside Wrestling*, Vol. 36, 2010)

"Greats of the Game" (*PWI*, January 2011)

2010 HIGHLIGHT: Beating Jeff Hardy to earn a World title shot and then beating Styles to win the title... on the same night.

2010 LOWLIGHT: Being forced to relinquish the TNA title due to spinal and brain injuries sustained in an attack by Abyss.

HOW OUR PREDICTION HELD UP: Van Dam was not included in last year's forecast.

2011 PROJECTED "PWI 500" RANKING: Not ranked because of inactivity due to political issues.



Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

WHAT'S AHEAD FOR JEFF HARDY IN 2011?

Jeff Hardy's heel turn at Bound for Glory was one of the most controversial stories of 2010. The most marketable and popular performer in TNA, Hardy turned his back on his fans and jumped on board with Hulk Hogan's latest attempt to recreate the NWO. It was a genuinely surprising move, one that could kick-start a new interest in TNA or could further erode the company's fan base and badly damage Hardy's future marketability.

Hardy has been a fan favorite for the vast majority of his entire career. This is pretty much new territory for him, and it will take a little bit of time before we find out if Hardy's attitude change will stick. History has shown several instances where a wrestler turns on the fans, but the fans simply refuse to boo him (Sting, Steve Austin, and Goldberg come to mind). Considering how passionate Hardy's fans are, there is a very real chance that they will ignore the heel turn and continue cheering their hero. Hardy may be an exciting performer, but interviews aren't his strong suit, and the most effective villains are also great speakers.

Even if Hardy manages to elicit a heel reaction from the fans, there's still the sticky situation of the drug possession and trafficking charges pending against him. Hardy's trial has been pushed back several times and, at press time, it's still unclear whether he will face jail time. Obviously, a prison sentence would dramatically affect Hardy's immediate future. If the reigning World champion is sent to jail on drug charges, TNA (and wrestling as a whole) will be dealt a stiff public relations blow.

TNA is investing a lot into Hardy, a curious deci-



Innovative wrestling from an innovative wrestler

sion given his unsure legal status, drug history, and history of erratic behavior (he was fired by TNA in 2006 after missing several shows). But with TNA (and Hogan) behind him, Hardy's status atop the company seems secure—provided he can stay out of jail. Now that brother Matt seems ready to join him, Hardy should be invigorated. He's going to try to become this decade's version of the ECW-era Raven. He'll do whatever he can to alienate his fans. If he avoids jail time, he should have a banner year.

12-Month Story Index

- Most Popular Wrestler of the Year (PW, March 2010)
- The Hardy Boyz: Are They Better Off in Separate Companies? (The Wrestler/Inside Wrestling, Vol. 33, 2010)
- "Four-Way Faceoff" (PW, December 2010)
- Greats of the Game (PW, January 2011)
- Data Sheet (The Wrestler/Inside Wrestling, Vol. 34, 2010)
- "Countdown To A Superfeud! A Hardy-RVD Showdown Is Inevitable" (The Wrestler/Inside Wrestling, Vol. 34, 2010)
- "Best Of The Best" (The Wrestler/Inside Wrestling, Vol. 35, 2010)
- "Hardy Comes Through In The Crutch: He Has The TNA Belt, But His Life Belongs To Hogan And Bischoff" (PW, February 2011)

2010 HIGHLIGHT: He may have sold out, but he won the TNA World championship. Joining Hogan's group ensured title gold at Bound for Glory.

2010 LOWLIGHT: After walking into TNA, Hardy was quickly given an opportunity to win the World title, but lost a number-one contenders match against Rob Van Dam on Impact.

HOW OUR PREDICTION HELD UP: Hardy was not included in last year's forecast.

2011 PROJECTED PW/500 RANKING: 9



Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

TNA

WHAT'S AHEAD FOR RODERICK STRONG IN 2011?

At Glory by Honor IX, Roderick Strong defeated Tyler Black to win the Ring of Honor heavyweight title. Seven years after his ROH debut, "The Messiah Of The Backbreaker" finally made it to the pinnacle of the promotion, but his victory rang a bit hollow. Black had signed a WWE developmental deal, and with the champion about to leave the company, a new champion *had* to be crowned.

Strong was in the right place at the right time. But unlike Black, who had doggedly pursued the championship for two years before finally beating Austin Aries, Strong was never an obvious successor waiting in the wings. He seems to be a champion of convenience—a wrestler with credibility who can hold the championship until a flashier candidate comes along. The fact that he recently wrestled a tryout match for TNA furthers the perception that he doesn't plan on sticking around ROH for the long haul.

Strong seems to have all the makings of a transitional champion, but that doesn't make him a push-over. He is a respected grappler with strong fundamentals and an expansive offensive arsenal. Now that he has finally captured the ROH title, he isn't about to give it up without a fight.

Strong is going to have to deal with three formidable challengers: Christopher Daniels, Davey Richards, and Kevin Steen. A returning Homicide is also in the mix. Bouts against Daniels and Richards promise to be thrilling affairs, and both men are guaranteed to push Strong to the limit. If Las Vegas posted odds, Daniels and Richards would be the favorites to take Strong's belt, but Steen is the most dangerous



Photo By George Napolitano

Facing big challenges as champ

of the three. Steen's unorthodox offense—coupled with Steve Corino's assistance—will be enough to defeat Strong. Strong will get his compulsory rematch, but Steen will go on to feud with Richards while Strong drops back down to the ROH mid-card. Think of Strong as this year's version of Jerry Lynn.

12-Month Story Index

"Has Strong Been Wrong All Along? It's Time For Him To Go For It Alone!" (*The Wrestler/Inside Wrestling*, Vol. 34, 2010)

"Four-Way Faceoff" (*PWI*, December 2010)

2010 HIGHLIGHT: Winning the ROH heavyweight title from Tyler Black at Glory by Honor IX.

2010 LOWLIGHT: Suffering a disappointing loss to Christopher Daniels in August.

HOW OUR 2010 PREDICTION HELD UP: Roderick Strong was not included in last year's forecast.

2011 PROJECTED *"PWI 500"* RANKING: 25



WHAT'S AHEAD FOR WADE BARRETT IN 2011?

The big man from Manchester, England, made a huge impact in WWE in 2010. He steamrolled the competition to win NXT Season One and earn a WWE title shot. That alone is an incredible accomplishment for a WWE newcomer with barely six years professional experience under his belt. But Barrett wasn't content to sit back and wait for WWE matchmakers to hand him his title shot. Instead, he took matters into his own hands, recruiting his NXT compatriots and forming The Nexus.

Barrett orchestrated an unforgettable Nexus beatdown on John Cena on *Raw* and guided the renegade heel faction to the WWE main event picture.

At Hell in a Cell, Barrett (with an assist from Husky Harris and Michael McGillicutty) defeated Cena, forcing Cena to become a member of Nexus. Cena and Barrett are uneasy allies, and there's no question that the tension between the two is going to explode in the near future.

There are a few ways the situation could unfold. Cena could undermine Barrett's authority from within and cause Nexus to implode. Barrett could simply fire Cena from the group, which would presumably force Cena out of WWE. Or Cena could rise up and challenge Barrett's authority in a bid to control The Nexus himself—which is what we foresee happening.

Barrett may be pretty smug now as he taunts Cena, but he'll be singing a different tune when Cena starts getting chummy with Justin Gabriel, David Otunga, and Heath Slater. Barrett has always treated his Nexus comrades like they are beneath him. It wouldn't take much for the rest of Nexus to



Whoopin' on 'The Champ'

switch their allegiances to a new leader, especially one as charismatic and accomplished as Cena.

Barrett will get booted from Nexus and will come out on the losing side of a short feud with Cena. Then he'll have to deal with former allies Daniel Bryan, Skip Sheffield, Michael Tarver, and Darren Young, all of whom are likely to resurface and get some revenge on the man who booted them from the group.

12-Month Story Index

"The NXT Invasion, 6 Doomsday Scenarios For WWE" (PWI, November 2010)

"Five-Way Faceoff" (PWI, December, 2010)

2010 HIGHLIGHT: Winning NXT Season One was impressive, but his role in coordinating the sadistic June 7 attack on John Cena was the highlight of his year.

2010 LOWLIGHT: In NXT Week 3, Barrett suffered a clean pinfall loss to Justin Gabriel. It was a humbling loss, both to Barrett and to his Pro, Chris Jericho.

HOW OUR 2010 PREDICTION HELD UP: Barrett was not included in last year's forecast issue.

2011 PROJECTED "PWI 500" RANKING: 22



WHAT'S AHEAD FOR MICHELLE MCCOOL IN 2011?

Michelle McCool proved that she was the premier Diva in WWE this year. She dominated a feud against Mickie James, staved off challenges from Beth Phoenix, unified the Divas and Women's championships, and successfully retained the title in a pair of victories over Natalya, whom many felt would take McCool's belt. She also captured the coveted number-one spot in the 2010 "PWI Female 50."

She and Layla have run roughshod over the competition and made a mark on both the Raw and Smackdown brands. Team Lay-Cool is sitting pretty. But it won't last.

McCool has made two critical mistakes. She has turned up her nose at every Diva in WWE, making her the most despised female in the company. Having the Women's title puts a big enough target on her back. McCool doesn't need to provide any extra motivation to the other Divas with her arrogance.

However, the biggest mistake McCool has made has been underestimating Layla.

It was Layla who scored the pinfall over Phoenix in the match that gave Lay-Cool the Women's championship. Layla, the former dancer and cheerleader, has become a formidable wrestler in her own right. McCool irked Layla when she swerved Layla to be the Lay-Cool representative to face Melina at Night of the Champions.

It's a classic case of keeping your friends close and your enemies closer. McCool has consistently disrespected Layla. It's only a matter of time before Layla strikes back. And, having worked so closely with McCool over the past year, Layla knows all of McCool's weaknesses.

In early-2011, Team Lay-Cool will fracture, with Layla becoming a fan favorite. Layla will use the knowledge she has accumulated (as well as McCool's arrogance) to win the Divas title. The loss will be the most difficult loss of McCool's career to date—her protégé will use the lessons McCool taught her to take her mentor's championship.

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Report Card (PWI, July 2010)

"WrestleMania 26: The Real Winners & Losers" (*The Wrestler/Inside Wrestling*, Vol. 34, 2010)

"The Facts Don't Lie: Michelle McCool Tops Third 'PWI Female 50'" (PWI, November 2010)



Showing her mean streak to Maria Kanellis

It may take a couple of months, but McCool will regroup. She will attack her former partner with savage aggression and will eventually reclaim the title. Once she regains the title, look for McCool to reign throughout 2011. She's the alpha female in WWE, and she will be throughout 2011.

2010 HIGHLIGHT: Beating Melina at Night of the Champions to unify the WWE Women's and Divas championships.

2010 LOWLIGHT: Mickie James needed just 20 seconds to upset McCool to win the Women's title at the 2010 Royal Rumble. It was a humbling loss.

HOW OUR 2010 PREDICTION HELD UP: McCool was not included in last year's forecast issue.

2011 PROJECTED "FEMALE 50" RANKING: 2



WHAT'S AHEAD FOR JOHN CENA IN 2011?

There are two ways John Cena's association with The Nexus can play out. Either Cena can find a loophole to escape the group ... or he'll eventually come to enjoy the perks that come with running with the renegade *NXT* alumni.

There's no question that Cena is the most marketable attraction in WWE. He sells tickets and merchandise, and he has been a fan favorite for seven years, a virtual eternity in this era. But Cena has always been a polarizing figure. He is wildly popular with the majority of the fans, yet despised by a vocal minority. Cena hears jeers in every arena, and he has for years. That sort of longstanding derision could cause a lesser man to crack, to lash out at the fans who boo him. Instead, Cena has remained resolute in standing up for what he believes is right. He is the conscience of WWE.

But now that Cena is forced to serve Wade Barrett, he may see things in a different way. After years of fighting the good fight, and still getting booed by some, Cena will discover that The Nexus lead a much more stress-free existence. Nexus attacks enemies at will. They live by their own rules and ignore the fans. Most importantly, they watch each other's backs. It has been a long time since Cena has had a trusted ally. The few friends he had began questioning his integrity once he was forced to join Nexus. R-Truth went so far as to say that Cena should quit WWE rather than fight against WWE's fan favorites. Not exactly a supportive point of view, given Cena's obligation.

The longer Cena remains in Nexus, the more he'll begin to enjoy it. Nexus will help Cena win the Royal Rumble (ousting Barrett along the way). He'll embrace being a rulebreaker and supplant Barrett

Photo by George Napolitano



Could be fighting alongside Sheamus in 2011 as the leader of the group. At WrestleMania, a heel Cena will end The Undertaker's vaunted winning streak. An evil Cena will be a successful Cena.

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Report Card (PWI, July 2010)

"Dissecting WrestleMania 26" (PWI, August 2010)

"WrestleMania 26: The Real Winners & Losers" (The Wrestler/Inside Wrestling, Vol. 34, 2010)

"War Of The Decades" (PWI, September 2010)

"Best Of The Best" (The Wrestler/Inside Wrestling, Vol. 35, 2010)

Hotseat (The Wrestler/Inside Wrestling, Vol. 35, 2010)

"Cena's Suicide Mission: There's No Winning And There's No Way Out" (PWI, December 2010)

"Four-Way Faceoff" (PWI, December 2010)

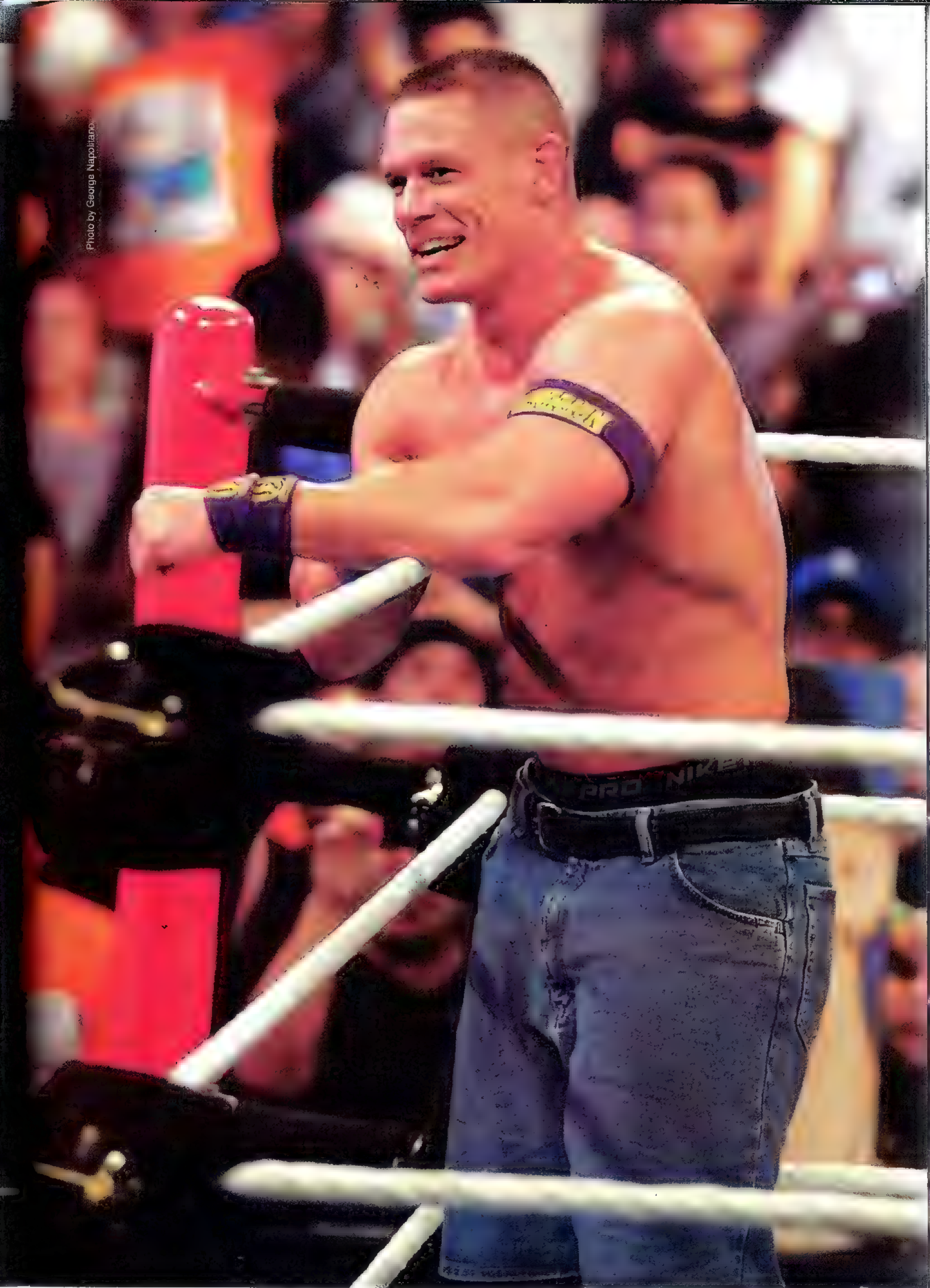
"Randy Orton vs. John Cena: PWI's Special 50-Category Analysis" (PWI, February 2011)

2010 HIGHLIGHT: Decisively defeating Batista at WrestleMania 26. It was a colossal win over his toughest opponent.

2010 LOWLIGHT: His loss to Wade Barrett at Hell in a Cell forced him into a subservient role in The Nexus.

HOW OUR 2010 PREDICTION HELD UP: We forecast that Cena would finally turn heel, leading to a dream match against The Rock at WrestleMania 26. The Rock/Cena match never happened, but Cena did turn heel (in a way) by joining Nexus. We give ourselves partial credit.

2011 PROJECTED "PWI 500" RANKING: 3



WHAT'S AHEAD FOR THE UNDERTAKER IN 2011?

We're betting on The Undertaker to win his war against Kane and to reclaim the World championship, but there's an inescapable feeling that we're witnessing Undertaker's swan song.

After 26 years in the game, the "Dead Man" is moving closer to retirement. His current feud with Kane notwithstanding, he has accomplished everything he can in wrestling. With a combined seven world titles to his credit (and an eighth if he unseats Kane, as we suspect he will), Taker has been a headliner in WWE for more than 20 years. His incredible WrestleMania winning streak of 18-0 will never be matched. Undertaker is one of the most respected competitors ever to lace up the boots. When a man has won every accolade, what is left for him to prove?

The feud with Kane brings The Undertaker's career back full circle. He reunited (then split with) longtime manager Paul Bearer. He's battling his half-brother in a storyline that goes back to their childhood (when the family funeral home burned down). In many ways, it's like Peter Gabriel teaming up with Phil Collins for a Genesis reunion tour. All the makings of a one-off are present. The intriguing question is whom The Undertaker will face at WrestleMania 27. If this is the end of the road, WM27 will be Undertaker's final 'Mania appearance. Age and injuries have proven that even the "Dead Man" is susceptible to the rigors of time. Even if he wishes to continue competing, there may come a point where his body simply will no longer let him.



Photo by George Napolitano

Does he have another "big match" in him?

Two things can happen at 'Mania: Undertaker can add yet another chapter to "The Streak" or he can pass the torch.

Perhaps the biggest money match in WWE today would be Undertaker against John Cena at WrestleMania. Cena—WWE's most marketable star of the past decade—would be the perfect person to finally end Undertaker's streak. Sheamus and Kane are also intriguing candidates for that slot.

Regardless of whether he wins or loses at WrestleMania, Taker is not likely to play a major role in WWE beyond that event. A lengthy sabbatical followed by a handful of guest appearances is possible. But there's a good chance WrestleMania will be the end of the road.

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Match of the Year (PWI, March 2010)

"Dead Man Walking: This Ghoulish Reign Could Bury Taker's Career" (The Wrestler/Inside Wrestling, Vol. 32, 2010)

Report Card (PWI, July 2010)

"Dissecting WrestleMania 26" (PWI, August 2010)

"WrestleMania 26: The Real Winners & Losers" (The Wrestler/Inside Wrestling, Vol. 34, 2010)

Spotlight (The Wrestler/Inside Wrestling, Vol. 35, 2010)

"Best Of The Best" (The Wrestler/Inside Wrestling, Vol. 35, 2010)

"The Choke's On You! Attacking Taker Will Cost Kane His Title... And His Career!" (PWI, December 2010)

2010 HIGHLIGHT: Beating Shawn Michaels once again in the main event of WrestleMania 26.

2010 LOWLIGHT: Spending three months in a "vegetative state" courtesy of Kane.

HOW OUR 2010 PREDICTION HELD UP: Last year, we suggested that Undertaker had another "big match" left in him. That part was accurate, but we said it would be against Batista. It was actually against Michaels.

2011 PROJECTED "PWI 500" RANKING: 9



WHAT'S AHEAD FOR EDGE IN 2011?

Edge's rants against Raw's anonymous general manager (including when he attacked and destroyed Michael Cole's laptop) turned him into a fan favorite. Though it was intended to be punishment, the GM did Edge a favor by sending him to Smackdown where main-event level fan favorites are in short supply. Edge is in prime position for World title shots and promises to be one of Smackdown's top names throughout the coming year.

After a relatively disappointing year, Edge could use some stability, and Smackdown can provide him with an opportunity for a new beginning.

Edge started 2010 in grand fashion, returning from a torn Achilles tendon to win the Royal Rumble. He challenged Chris Jericho to a World title match at WrestleMania and promised to spear Jericho into oblivion. Well, Edge managed to hit the spear, but he wasn't able to take Jericho's title. Jack Swagger leapfrogged Edge into the title picture and Edge was traded to Raw, where he inexplicably went back to being a rulebreaker, squandering the momentum and fan support he had developed.

Now that he's back on Smackdown, Edge can wage his war on stupidity on such worthy targets as Swagger, Kane, Alberto Del Rio, and perhaps even Teddy Long. As a fan favorite, Edge has a slew of fresh opponents to face, creating some intriguing potential feuds and matchups.

Edge has been called "The Ultimate Opportunist" because of his predilection for taking advantage of shortcuts to score championship matches. In 2010, Edge's luck ran out as he squandered his Royal Rumble title shot and couldn't get the job done in multiple-man matches or Money in the Bank matches. It's time for Edge to get his title matches

the old-fashioned way: by earning them.

Assuming he can beat Swagger, he'll be ready for a World title shot as soon as the Kane/Undertaker war ends. Edge should reign as World champion from WrestleMania through SummerSlam, and a second World title run in the latter half of 2011 isn't out of the question.

Photo by George Napolitano



Back when he was the "Rated-R Superstar"

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"Dissecting WrestleMania 26" (PWI, August 2010)

"WrestleMania 26: The Real Winners & Losers" (The Wrestler/Inside Wrestling, Vol. 34, 2010)

Press Conference (PWI, September 2010)

"War Of The Decades" (PWI, September 2010)

"On The Edge Of Our Seats: When Will The Feud With Christian Begin?" (The Wrestler/Inside Wrestling, Vol. 35, 2010)

"Four-Way Faceoff" (PWI, December 2010)

2010 HIGHLIGHT: Edge returned at the Royal Rumble, several months before the doctors predicted he would. He won his first Rumble and earned a title shot at WrestleMania.

2010 LOWLIGHT: Edge lost his mind when he attacked Michael Cole's computer in a tirade against the Raw GM. Sure, it was funny, but it also looked like Edge had come unhinged.

HOW OUR 2010 PREDICTION HELD UP: We didn't think Edge would be back from his injury so quickly. He surprised us by winning the Rumble and wrestling at Mania, but the latter half of 2010 was disappointing.

2011 PROJECTED "PWI 500" RANKING: 2



Photo by George K. Adams

WHAT'S AHEAD FOR MR. ANDERSON IN 2011?

Given his new self-professed nickname, perhaps a tag team with Billy "Mr. Ass" Gunn would be in order.

Seriously, we have no idea what Mr. Anderson is trying to achieve these days. He joined TNA as an arrogant rulebreaker, then somehow managed to win over the fans, but he still takes pride in the fact that he's an ... well, we just can't print that word in a family publication.

Anderson just rubs people the wrong way, and it is no secret that he enjoys doing it. He's not a traditional fan favorite, yet he does hear more cheers than boos when he enters the ring—even when fighting against other fan favorites such as Kurt Angle or "Pope" D'Angelo Dinero. He just likes to fight and doesn't care what anyone else thinks about him ... which makes him uniquely suited to survive in TNA in 2011.

With the company still reeling from the revelation of "They" at Bound for Glory, every TNA employee is questioning the allegiances of his co-workers. Anderson, however, couldn't care less. As far as he's concerned, everyone is an enemy, and that attitude might just pay dividends during this tumultuous time in TNA.

If Anderson can resist the lure of joining Hogan's group (and we simply cannot foresee Anderson and Bischoff co-existing on the same team), he's in position to become TNA's "Diamond" Dallas Page—the guy willing to take a stand against the dominant heel group and give them hell every step of the way.

Anderson has never been a world champion, but we never got the sense that title belts were what motivated him. He likes to create controversy and to kick butt. Feuding with Hogan's group gives him the opportunity to do both of those things.

Anderson will be a thorn in Hogan's side and he figures to be the most consistent (and consistently entertaining) fan favorite on the TNA roster.

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Capsule Profile (*The Wrestler/Inside Wrestling*, Vol. 34, 2010)

"Four-Way Faceoff" (*PWI*, December 2010)

The (W)Hole Truth About Mr. Anderson (*The Wrestler/Inside Wrestling*, Vol. 36, 2010)



Unlikely TNA fan favorite

He won't back down from Hogan's group, and he's clever enough to come up with brilliant ways to keep Hogan, Bischoff, and crew off-kilter and flummoxed. Remember how Steve Austin used to give Vince McMahon's Corporation fits? Look for Anderson to take a page out of the Austin playbook.

Anderson has no allies, and he'll need allies if he wants to overcome the numbers disadvantage needed to take the World title. But, whether or not he claims the TNA World championship title or not, doesn't much matter. Anderson will be TNA's most dynamic and compelling performer in 2011.

2010 HIGHLIGHT Wins over Kurt Angle are hard to come by, but Mr. Anderson managed to beat the Olympian on *Impact* in a ladder match to win the key to the Lockdown cage.

2010 LOWLIGHT Despite having the key to the cage in his possession, Anderson still lost to Angle at Lockdown.

HOW OUR 2010 PREDICTION HELD UP Anderson was not included in last year's forecast.

2011 PROJECTED PWI 500 RANKING 7



WHAT'S AHEAD FOR DAVEY RICHARDS IN 2011?

Photo by Scott Finkelstein



Richards is a very competitor in the ROH title mix

The former Ring of Honor tag team champion had a career-making year in 2010. He became a rising star in the singles ranks and emerged as a leading contender for the Ring of Honor title. There's a definite buzz about Richards, who has also had success in Dragon Gate USA, EVOLVE, and New Japan. Clearly, he can be considered one of the indy circuit's premiere and elite supestars.

Many observers have pegged Richards as the next Ring of Honor champion, but we're not quite ready to make that leap. Richards is enormously talented. He is a submission master and smash-mouth striker cut from the same mold as Chris Benoit. He has a passionate fan base and is currently the top contender to the ROH title.

But there's a lingering question about Richards' commitment to wrestling. In interviews earlier this year, Richards announced that he planned on retiring from wrestling at the end of the year and said he plans to become a fireman. Since then, he has backtracked on those comments and signed a new contract with ROH in September, crediting his mother for convincing him to stick with his wrestling career.

But, as former Buffalo Bills head coach Marv Levy once said, "Once you start thinking about retirement, you've already retired." If Richards' true passion is to

be a firefighter, then he'll never fully have his heart into being a wrestler.

Richards has downplayed the retirement talk lately. Maybe he has reassessed his priorities. Maybe he's just being a good company man and sticking with ROH for another year to help a promotion that has been steadily losing its headliners. Only Richards knows what his true priorities are. But as long as his career goals remain unclear, it's hard to see him winning the ROH title. The company has had too many champions up and walk away; the last thing it wants to do is crown Richards and see him leave to be a firefighter six months later.

Look for Richards to get plenty of title shots and continue to make tours of Japan. A TV title reign isn't out of the question, but the ROH heavyweight title will remain out of his reach.

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"Davey Richards, Ring of Honor's Reluctant Road Warrior" (*The Wrestler/Inside Wrestling*, Vol. 33, 2010)

Report Card (*PWI*, July 2010)

"Four-Way Faceoff" (*PWI*, December 2010)

2010 HIGHLIGHT: Richards came close to winning the ROH title at Death by Dishonor VIII and pushed champion Tyler Black to his limit in a hard-fought contest.

2010 LOWLIGHT: An upset loss to American Wolves partner Eddie Edwards in the finals of the tournament to crown the first ROH TV champion.

HOW OUR 2010 PREDICTION HELD UP: Richards was not included in last year's forecast issue.

2011 PROJECTED "PWI 500" RANKING: 18

Photo by Scott Finkelstein



WHAT'S AHEAD FOR THE MOTOR CITY MACHINE GUNS IN 2011?

Every once in a while, a tag team comes along that reminds you how exciting tag team wrestling can be.

As individuals, Chris Sabin and Alex Shelley were X division institutions. They spent a good deal of time competing in multiple-man scramble matches but were never quite able to break through the glass ceiling and establish themselves as singles competitors.

Eventually, the two Detroit boys began teaming, and they've grown into the best pound-for-pound tandem in the sport today.

Long considered to be the most exciting team in TNA, it took more than two years for the MCMG to finally capture the TNA tag team title. Since winning the vacant title at Victory Road, the Guns have been on a roll, successfully defending the belts against Beer Money Inc. and Generation Me, with a clash against Team 3-D looming.

One of the reasons for the Guns' success is that they have largely avoided unnecessary feuds and entanglements. They sat on the sidelines during the Front Line/Main Event Mafia feud, and so far they're not getting drawn into the Immortals/Fortune situation. Their isolationist policies have helped them stay focused on the TNA tag team title.

The Guns would be well-advised to remain on an island in 2011 as well. They have something special going for them. Even if they lose the tag belts, they are a tandem where the sum is greater than the individual parts. With or without the belts, the Guns are one of wrestling's great teams. They might one day be listed alongside The Rockers, The Rock 'n' Roll



Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

Working together to be the best in TNA

Express, and The Midnight Express as one of the sport's most innovative and influential teams. If they split, the odds are that both Sabin and Shelley would slip back down into X division obscurity. They need to stick together to remain a force in TNA.

After a feud with Team 3-D, the Guns will likely drop the belts (perhaps to Ink Inc.), but they'll quickly regain them and will remain one of TNA's elite teams throughout the year.

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Press Conference (PWI, December 2010)

2010 HIGHLIGHT: Rallying from a 2-0 deficit by winning three straight matches to take the best-of-five series against arch-rivals Beer Money.

2010 LOWLIGHT: Shelley suffered serious injuries in a vicious sneak-attack by Generation Me. They were nearly stripped of the tag belts because of Shelley's injuries.

HOW OUR 2010 PREDICTION HELD UP: The Motor City Machine Guns were not included in last year's forecast issue.

2011 Projected "PWI 500" Ranking: Sabin, 62; Shelley, 55.



WHAT'S AHEAD FOR MADISON RAYNE IN 2011?

The former Beautiful Person is in the process of reinventing herself. As part of The Beautiful People with Angelina Love and Velvet Sky, Rayne was always treated as the lesser member. Once Love ran into visa problems and was out of TNA for a few months, Rayne finally began to assert herself, gradually becoming the leader of The Beautiful People, which grew to include Lacey Von Erich. She also proved that she was a superior wrestler to Sky and Von Erich, and a worthy successor to Love.

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling



Rayne: Needs alliances to thrive

Once Love returned, it was clear that there wasn't room for both she and Rayne in TBP. Rayne broke away and formed a partnership with Tara. She changed her look, becoming a brunette, and also becoming much more vocal. The results speak for themselves. She is a three-time Knockouts champion and a Knockouts tag team champion.

Mickie James made a telling misstatement in an interview on *Reaction* the night of her debut. When asked about her goals, James said she had her eye on the Knockouts champion, Madison Rayne. Of course, Love was the champion at the time. James must have had Rayne on her mind, and for good reason. A case could be made that Rayne has been TNA's best Knockout of 2010. And she's in perfect position to rule the Knockouts division in the new year.

Rayne has to be considered the underdog in a protracted feud against James, and James is very likely to win the Knockouts title in the near future. But Madison has shown she will do whatever she

can to get that belt back. She relies on alliances and interference to gain a mental edge over an opponent. Once she gets that edge, her own wrestling ability is usually enough to get the job done.

Count on Rayne to hold the Knockouts title for most of 2011. Feuds with James, Tara, Love, and Von Erich are likely, but Rayne will find a way to remain TNA's top Knockout.

12-Month Story Index

Data Sheet (*The Wrestler/Inside Wrestling*, Vol. 35, 2010)

"PWI Female 50" (PWI, November 2010)

2010 HIGHLIGHT: By pinning Tara in a tag team match at Lockdown, Rayne won Love's Knockouts title, becoming the first woman to hold the Knockouts and Knockouts tag team championships simultaneously.

2010 LOWLIGHT: She won her third Knockouts title by demanding that Tara lay down for her. Not only was that unfair to her partner, but it also showed disrespect for the championship and tarnished both the Knockouts title and her image.

HOW OUR 2010 PREDICTION HELD UP: Rayne was not included in last year's forecast.

2011 PROJECTED "FEMALE 50" RANKING: 5



WHAT'S AHEAD FOR SHEAMUS IN 2011?

The Celtic Warrior stunned the wrestling world in 2009 when he upset John Cena for the WWE championship. In 2010, Sheamus proved he was the real deal. He is now a two-time WWE champion who can boast victories over Cena, Randy Orton, and Triple-H. Not too shabby for a guy who has only been on the main WWE roster for little more than a year.

Still, Sheamus' tactics leave much to be desired. As champion, he frequently relied upon intentional disqualifications to retain the belt. He assaulted opponents before their matches. He benefited from the outside interference of The Nexus on several occasions. He has very few clean victories or outstanding matches to boast.

There's also the looming shadow of Triple-H. Sheamus will say he retired Triple-H. But until we hear it from Triple-H's mouth, we don't buy it. Triple-H will be back, and the first thing he's going to do is seek revenge against Sheamus.

Assuming Triple-H returns soon, Sheamus will likely be tied up in that feud for the first few months of 2011. If he manages to earn some victories against "The Game," that puts him in a commanding position for WrestleMania. But if he loses against Triple-H, that will likely bump him down the 'Mania card. Sheamus had a successful run in 2010, but he needs to do more if he wants that good fortune to extend into the new year. He needs to start earning some clean, decisive victories over top contenders. He needs to remind the critics that he deserves his spot on top of the Raw brand.

Sheamus has the potential to be one of WWE's top stars for the next decade. A solid workhorse with power and a high-impact offense, he could become a successor to The Undertaker or The Big Show. But if he can't shake his reputation as an undeserving champion, a few big losses could ruin his career. The coming months are crucial.

12-Month Story Index

Data Sheet (The Wrestler/Inside Wrestling, Vol. 32, 2010)

"The New 'Baddest Man On The Planet' Is There Anyone In WWE Who Can Stand Up To Sheamus?" (PWI, June 2010)

Report Card (PWI, July 2010)

"Dissecting WrestleMania 26" (PWI, August 2010)

"WrestleMania 26: The Real Winners & Losers" (The Wrestler/Inside Wrestling, Vol. 34, 2010)

"Four-Way Faceoff" (PWI, December 2010)

"Six DOs In A Month? Shameful Sheamus!" (The Wrestler/Inside Wrestling, Vol. 36, 2010)



Photo by George Napolitano

Expect this battle to renew itself

2010 HIGHLIGHT: Very few people can say they were able to beat Triple-H in a streetfight. Sheamus did it at Extreme Rules.

2010 LOWLIGHT: Triple-H needed just 12 minutes to score a convincing win over Sheamus at WM26. Ouch!

HOW OUR 2010 PREDICTION HELD UP: Sheamus was not included in last year's forecast issue.

2011 PROJECTED "PWI 500" RANKING: 6



Foto: G. Napolitano

WHAT'S AHEAD FOR C.M. PUNK IN 2011?

If C.M. Punk had his way, 2010 would be stricken from the record books.

After dropping the World championship to The Undertaker at the Hell in a Cell in 2009, Punk looked to regroup by forming The Straight Edge Society, a flock of followers that strictly adhered to his straight-edge philosophy. Luke Gallows was the first convert, followed by Serena and Joey Mercury. Punk seemed more like a deranged cult leader than a three-time world champion.

Punk spent most of the year trying to push his moral beliefs down people's throats, and he took a precipitous drop out of title contention. He had a lengthy feud with Rey Mysterio Jr. that saw Rey humiliate him at WrestleMania and then shave his head at Over the Limit. His Straight Edge Society began to crumble, as none of his followers could live up to Punk's moral guidelines. By fall, Punk became immersed in a go-nowhere feud with The Big Show, a feud that saw Punk lose repeatedly.

On paper, 2010 was a lousy year. Punk lost his hair, alienated his friends and fans, and slipped entirely out of title contention. But Punk did make headway by establishing himself as one of the most hated wrestlers on the Smackdown roster. He delivered several tremendous promos that incited fans. Often, his segments on *Smackdown* were the most entertaining segments of the show. Punk may not have won championships in 2010, but he certainly put himself in a position to make waves in 2011.

Now that The Straight Edge Society has disbanded, Punk has the opportunity to reboot and get back to the business of winning gold belts. Punk may be arrogant, but he's also cunning. Now that he has been moved to Raw, he'll have some fresh feuds



Down year for the straight edge guru

and a new roster to pick apart with his straight-edge ways. With Gallows left on Smackdown, Punk has but one choice: to go for the WWE championship.

Twice, Punk has set himself up by winning Money in the Bank matches to earn title shots. In 2011, he won't wait until WM27 to secure his title shot. He'll earn his shot by winning the Royal Rumble. Punk should become one of the top heels on the Raw brand for the coming year, and feuds with Daniel Bryan, John Cena, and Randy Orton will result in some of the year's best matches.

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"Drunk With Power: C.M. Punk Has Gone Over The Straight Edge" (*The Wrestler/Inside Wrestling*, Vol. 33, 2010)

Report Card (*PWI*, July 2010)

"Dissecting WrestleMania 26" (*PWI*, August 2010)

"WrestleMania 26: The Real Winners & Losers" (*The Wrestler/Inside Wrestling*, Vol. 34, 2010)

Wrestling Timeline (*The Wrestler/Inside Wrestling*, Vol. 34, 2010)

Most Hated Wrestler of the Half-Year (*PWI*, September 2010)

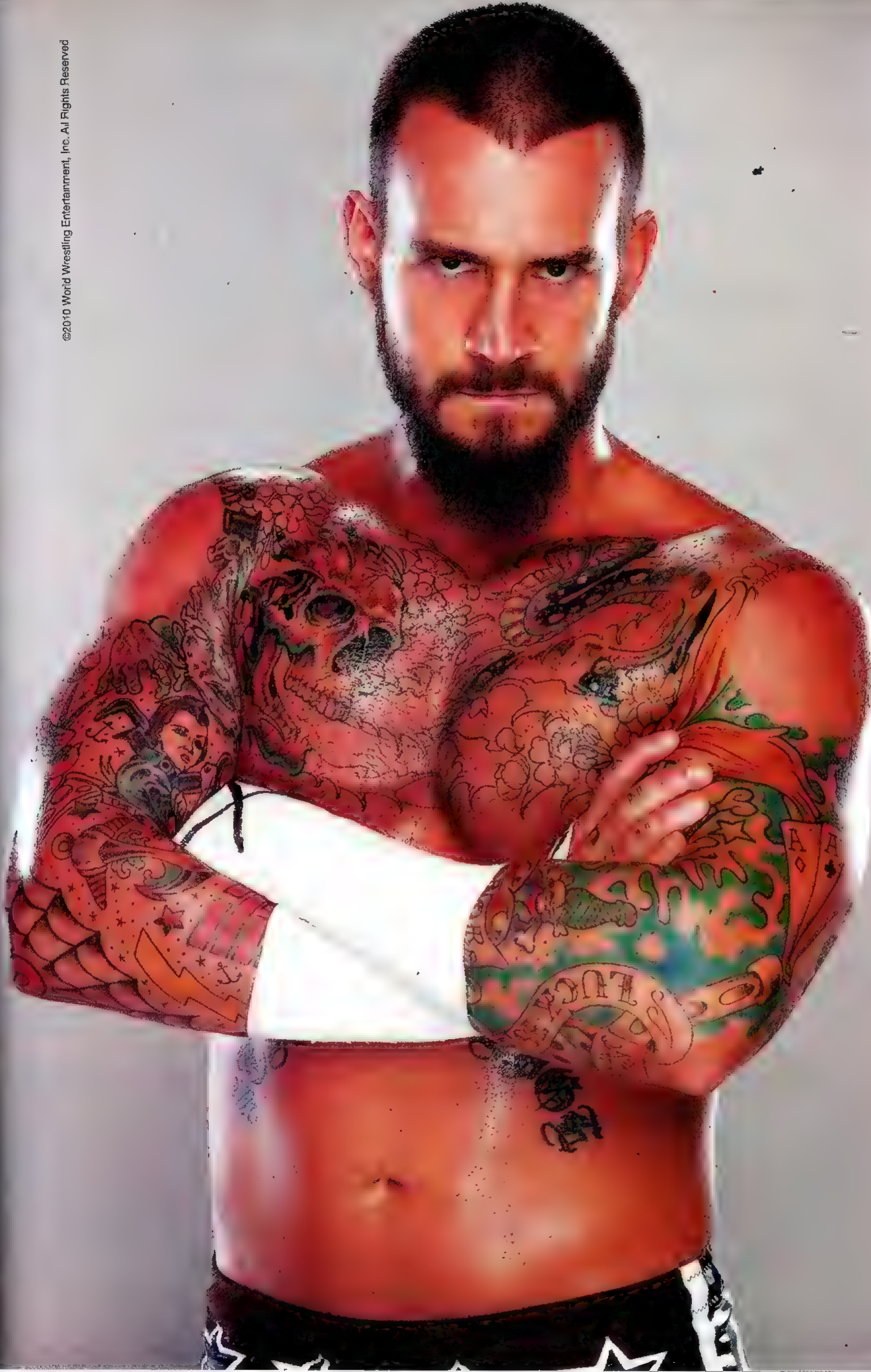
"Four-Way Faceoff" (*PWI*, December 2010)

2010 HIGHLIGHT: The closest Punk came to winning the World title was at the Fatal 4-Way PPV in June.

2010 LOWLIGHT: Losing his locks at Over the Limit was sheer humiliation.

HOW OUR PREDICTION HELD UP: We said Mysterio and Punk would have one of the hottest feuds of the year. We also predicted the fans would make Punk a star, and we're standing by that.

2011 PROJECTED "PWI 500" RANKING: 10



WHAT'S AHEAD FOR DANIEL BRYAN IN 2011?

The former Ring of Honor champion had long been considered one of the best pure grapplers in the world, regularly being named as the best pound-for-pound wrestler in the annual "PW! Poll." Perhaps the most respected wrestler on the independent circuit, the 11-year veteran underwent the ignominy of being branded a *NXT* "rookie" and was paired with The Miz as his mentor. Bryan endured Miz' abuse, as well as the constant haranguing of announcer Michael Cole, despite having wrestled then-World champion Chris Jericho in a terrific bout in his *NXT* debut.

Bryan quickly became the favorite to win *NXT*, but also became a target. On the May 11 edition of *Raw*, he was eliminated from *NXT*. A month later, Bryan joined the rest of the *NXT* cast in attacking John Cena. As the group that would become The Nexus laid waste to the ring-side area, Bryan attacked ring announcer Justin Roberts, strangling him with his own tie.

That attack violated WWE's PG content guidelines and Bryan was terminated just as the hottest feud of the year was getting under way. But a mid-summer return to the indies once again made Bryan the hottest free agent in the sport and ignited a buzz about him. At SummerSlam, Bryan returned as the surprise member of Team WWE, standing beside Cena in the main event. He then went on to beat Miz to win the U.S. title.

It truly was a storybook year for the former "American Dragon." But the next chapter of the story may be a downer.

Bryan has made it to WWE, but now he has to survive. With Cole leading the way, Bryan is being portrayed as an out-of-touch nerd. To survive in



Wrestling lights-out in his *NXT* debut

WWE, Bryan is going to need to blow his own horn and promote himself. He needs worthy opponents who can push him to showcase his scientific mastery. Having Bryan wrestle four-minute matches full of punches, kicks, and a finishing move is like hiring Rush drummer Neal Peart to play the tambourine. He made it to WWE; now he has to prove he belongs.

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"Danielson vs. Shingo: If You Take The Word Of 200 Fans... This Was The Match Of The Year" (PW! December 2010)

"A Choker? Not Daniel Bryan! How His Success Could Change WWE Forever!" (PW! February 2011)

2010 HIGHLIGHT: His WWE return at SummerSlam surprised the wrestling world, and also ruined The Miz' night.

2010 LOWLIGHT: His release took the edge off The Nexus storyline and appeared to be a career-threatening setback.

HOW OUR 2010 PREDICTION HELD UP: Daniel was not included in last year's forecast issue.

2011 PROJECTED "500" RANKING: 14



WHAT'S AHEAD FOR THE BIG SHOW IN 2011?

The Big Show has bounced back and forth between being a good guy and being a bad guy so many times that his own mother would have a hard time remembering if she should cheer him or not.

At the start of 2010, he was one of Raw's top heels. He won the Unified tag team title with The Miz, and ShowMiz ran roughshod over both the Raw and Smackdown brands until they dropped the straps to The Hart Dynasty. Following that loss, Show punched out The Miz and was then dealt to Smackdown, where he once again became a fan favorite.

Show enjoyed a respectable second half of the year, feuding with then-World champion Jack Swagger (though he never beat Swagger for that belt), then dominated C.M. Punk in a lengthy feud.

If The Big Show is advertised as "The World's Largest Athlete," we have to ask how can someone so big have such a small impact?

The only thing consistent about The Big Show is his maddening inconsistency. His weight fluctuates wildly. He's a good guy one day and a bad guy the next. He's an angry giant with a lethal right hand one week and a harmless comedy act the following week.

Show—and WWE—have conditioned fans to not take him seriously (he stars in a new WWE-produced film called *Knucklehead*, for goodness sake!).

If Show does nothing else in 2011, he must demonstrate to the wrestling world why he is to be taken seriously.

Versatility is usually a good thing, but Show lacks an identity. Even though he's been wrestling for 15 years, it's like we don't know who he really is. Is he the manipulating juggernaut that feuded with The Undertaker in 2008 or is he the self-effacing comedian who jawed with C.M. Punk in 2010?

If Show takes himself seriously, we should expect a serious run at Kane's title, a feud with Sheamus on Raw, maybe even a mini-feud with 'Taker. Only by taking on and defeating the most dangerous men



Photo By George Napolitano

Showed signs of old dominance against SES at SummerSlam

in WWE will Show convince his foes and fans that he is every bit as dominant as we all expect a man of his size to be.

12-Month Story Index

Report Card (PWI, July 2010)

"Dissecting WrestleMania 26" (PWI, August 2010)

"WrestleMania 26: The Real Winners & Losers" (*The Wrestler/Inside Wrestling*, Vol. 34, 2010)

Tag Tears of the Half Year (PWI, September 2010)

Four-Way Faceoff (PWI, December 2010)

"How Tag Team Wrestling Made Big Show Into A Solo Juggernaut!" (PWI, February 2011)

2010 HIGHLIGHT: Defeating The Straight Edge Society in a handicap match at SummerSlam.

2010 LOWLIGHT: Losing the Unified tag team title to The Hart Dynasty on the April 26 *Raw* was embarrassing.

HOW OUR 2010 PREDICTION HELD UP: We wrote "Big Show, the physical attraction that he is, always seems to find his way back into the main-event scene. But, he's also had long periods of aimlessness, and chances are, he will wind up enduring yet another up-and-down year." Nailed it.

2011 PROJECTED "PWI 500" RANKING: 30



Photo By George Napolitano

WHAT'S AHEAD FOR KURT ANGLE IN 2011?

The Olympic hero was dealt one raw deal after another in 2010. In January, Angle's World title hopes were dashed when Ric Flair interfered on behalf of AJ Styles at Genesis. Despite a stipulation that prevented him from receiving additional title shots against Styles, Angle was granted a rematch on *Impact*, where he was robbed by referee Earl Hebner, who had been paid off by Flair. After a bloody feud with Mr. Anderson and a brief sabbatical, Angle returned to TNA where he declared he was going to fight his way through the company's top 10 rankings to earn a title shot. Angle fought his way up the ladder, and then made it to the finals of a tournament for the vacant TNA World title at Bound for Glory. He was so committed to recapturing the World title that he announced he would retire if he didn't win the belt. Unfortunately, Angle didn't factor Hulk Hogan and Eric Bischoff into his plans. Hogan gave an assist to Jeff Hardy, allowing him to claim the championship.

Now Angle is in a quandary. He can honor his promise and retire, or he can renege on his word and try to get revenge on Hardy, Hogan, and Eric Bischoff. But even if he goes back on his word, Angle faces an uphill battle.

Angle is a Hall-of-Famer who is widely considered the best wrestler of his era. But because of politics and outside interference, he can't even get a fair shot at the title. Now that Hogan, Bischoff, and Jeff Jarrett have formed a new group that wields considerable political power, title shots are going to be even harder to come by. Angle will also have to get past Mr. Anderson (that feud shows no signs of abating) as well as Ric Flair's Fortune.

Angle is a marked man. It's clear that he is compelled to be the best. He *needs* the World championship. And until he reclaims it, his work in TNA isn't done. Angle will overtake Rob Van Dam as the most popular wrestler in TNA and he will battle against the new Hogan regime. He'll reclaim the championship, but he won't rest until he sends Bischoff and



Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

More bouts with Anderson looming in 2011

Hogan packing from TNA. He'll go through both Abyss and Jarrett, and will finally get his hands on Hardy at Sacrifice, where the new Angle Era will begin. He needs the championship, and TNA needs Angle as champion.

12-Month Story Index

"Violent Valentines: Kurt & Karen Angle" (*The Wrestler/Inside Wrestling*, Vol. 32, 2010)

Report Card (*PWI*, July 2010)

"Best Of The Best" (*The Wrestler/Inside Wrestling*, Vol. 35, 2010)

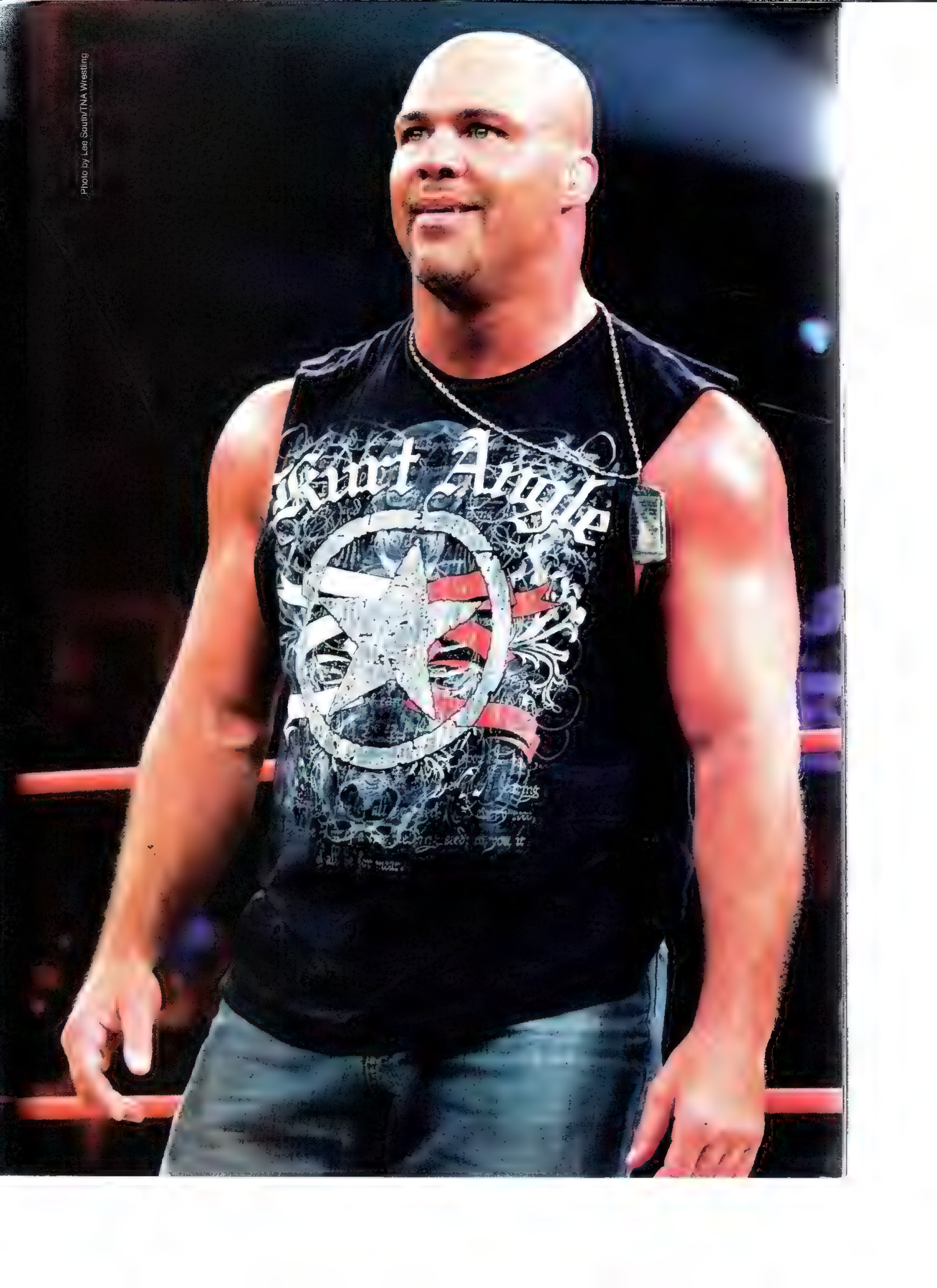
"Four-Way Faceoff" (*PWI*, December 2010)

2010 HIGHLIGHT: Defeating Mr. Anderson at Lockdown, a win he dedicated to the U.S. military.

2010 LOWLIGHT: Spitting in Hogan's face after Hebner's crooked officiating cost him a title match against Styles. Talk about low class.

HOW OUR 2010 PREDICTION HELD UP: We predicted that Angle would shift his attention away from the World title and spend most of the year feuding with Bobby Lashley. Instead, the World title proved to be his unobtainable Holy Grail... and Lashley disappeared.

2011 PROJECTED *PWI* 500[®] RANKING: 8



WHAT'S AHEAD FOR THE MIZ IN 2011?

The Miz may not be awesome, but he has gotten pretty darn good.

Miz held the U.S. title for a combined seven-plus months of 2010 (his reign was briefly interrupted by Bret Hart). He also held the Unified tag team championship with The Big Show and won the Money in the Bank guaranteed title shot. If that wasn't enough, he appeared on Seasons One and Two of *NXT* as a Pro (with Daniel Bryan and Alex Riley, respectively).

The past year was been a busy one for Miz. It was also the most successful of his career. Things are only going to get better in 2011.

No, Miz isn't popular, but he has plenty of momentum, a guaranteed title shot he can use at his discretion, and a lackey running interference for him in Riley. Right now, Miz is still seeking to avenge his U.S. title loss to Bryan, but eventually he'll see that loss was a blessing in disguise. Instead of concerning himself with defending that championship, Miz can set his eyes on a bigger prize: a world title. As prestigious as it is, the U.S. title was actually holding him back from achieving even greater things.

Miz will bide his time and wait until one of those champions is in a weakened condition, then he will cash in his title shot and cruise to a world title. Knowing Miz, he'll want to cash in on the biggest stage of all. If the stars align, *WrestleMania 27* will end with The Miz wearing one of the WWE world titles.



Photo by Stu Sak

Not awesome, but very good, and ready for the main event.

Of course, he doesn't *have* to cash in his title shot at *Mania*. But if a champion expends every bit of energy and looks particularly vulnerable, Miz will almost certainly take that opportunity to strike. If, however, the champion doesn't appear adequately fatigued, he may wait until a later date. He has until mid-July to take advantage of that title shot.

Regardless of when he makes his move, there's every reason to expect Miz to become a world champion this year. The fans may not like it, but he'll be a main-event star in 2011.

12-Month Story Index

"You Can Still Hate Him, But You Have To Respect Him: The Miz—Etable Days Are Over" (*PWI*, June 2010)

Report Card (*PWI*, July 2010)

"Dissecting *WrestleMania 26*" (*PWI*, August 2010)

Four-Way Faceoff (*PWI*, December 2010)

WrestleMania 26: The Real Winners & Losers (*The Wrestler/Inside Wrestling*, Vol. 34, 2010)

War Of The Decades (*PWI*, September 2010)

Tag Team of the Half Year (*PWI*, September 2010)

Miz Congeniality: He's Not The Real Reason He's The Most Hated Man In The Locker Room (*The Wrestler/Inside Wrestling*, Vol. 36, 2010)

2010 HIGHLIGHT: Winning the Raw Money in the Bank match put Miz in position to become a world champion.

2010 LOWLIGHT: Miz was snubbed for Daniel Bryan as part of Team WWE at SummerSlam.

HOW OUR PREDICTION HELD UP: Miz was not included in last year's forecast issue.

2011 PROJECTED "PWI 500" RANKING: 5



WHAT'S AHEAD FOR DOLPH ZIGGLER IN 2011?

According to his entrance music, Dolph Ziggler is perfection. In reality, he's far from it, but he is pretty darn good.

Entrance music aside, Ziggler bears a striking resemblance to "Mr. Perfect," Curt Hennig. From the way he moves around the ring to the way he rolls with the punches, the similarities between Ziggler and Hennig are easy to see.

Like Hennig, Ziggler is an extremely talented technician and an impressive athlete. Unlike Hennig, he didn't come to WWE with a world championship on his resume (Hennig was AWA World champion) or a fancy pedigree (Hennig was a second-generation wrestler, the son of Larry "The Axe" Hennig). Hennig wasn't always popular, but he was always respected.

Ziggler has a lot of talent, but he doesn't command the respect that "Mr. Perfect" did. In fact, his association with Vickie Guerrero has made him something of a laughingstock.

Ziggler managed to capture the Intercontinental title in 2010, but he has a long road ahead of him before he obtains the respect—from the fans and his peers—that he feels he deserves.

In 2011, Ziggler will break away from Guerrero and blaze his own path. The very presence of NXT Season Three rookie Kaitlyn at ringside during Ziggler's matches suggests his association with Guerrero will be short-lived.

A move from Smackdown to Raw will give him a new beginning. In feuds against Evan Bourne and Daniel Bryan, Ziggler will make a name for himself. Shawn Michaels filled a unique slot on the Raw brand; he was the man who delivered incredible matches on every pay-per-view. In 2011, the "show-stopper" will be Dolph Ziggler. That might be a heavy prediction to live up to, but then few wrestlers are as eager to impress as the super-confident Ziggler is.

Ziggler doesn't need Guerrero or any silly gimmicks. He is good enough to succeed on his own. He just needs a fresh start. A move to Raw would give him that new start.

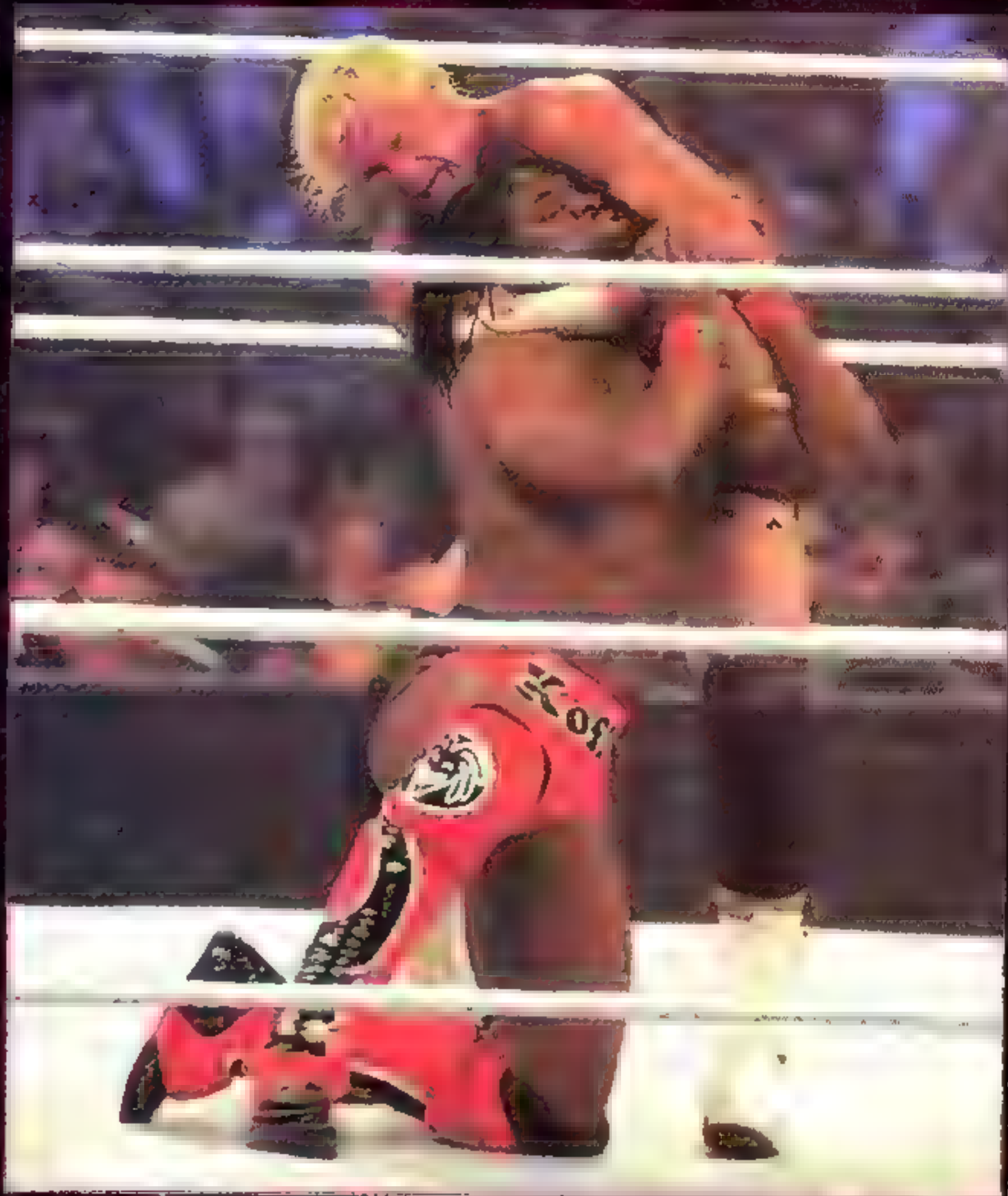


Photo by George Napolitano

Two of WWE's most improved fight for I-C belt

Ziggler figures to be a show-stealer in the Money in the Bank match at WrestleMania 27, but he'll finally ascend to the main-event level by SummerSlam.

Ziggler will become one of WWE's top workhorses. Most fans won't appreciate his development, but by the time 2012 rolls around, Ziggler promises to be one of Raw's most popular stars.

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Report Card (PWI, July 2010)

"Dissecting WrestleMania 26" (PWI, August 2010)

WrestleMania 26: The Real Winners & Losers (The Wrestler/Inside Wrestling, Vol. 34, 2010)

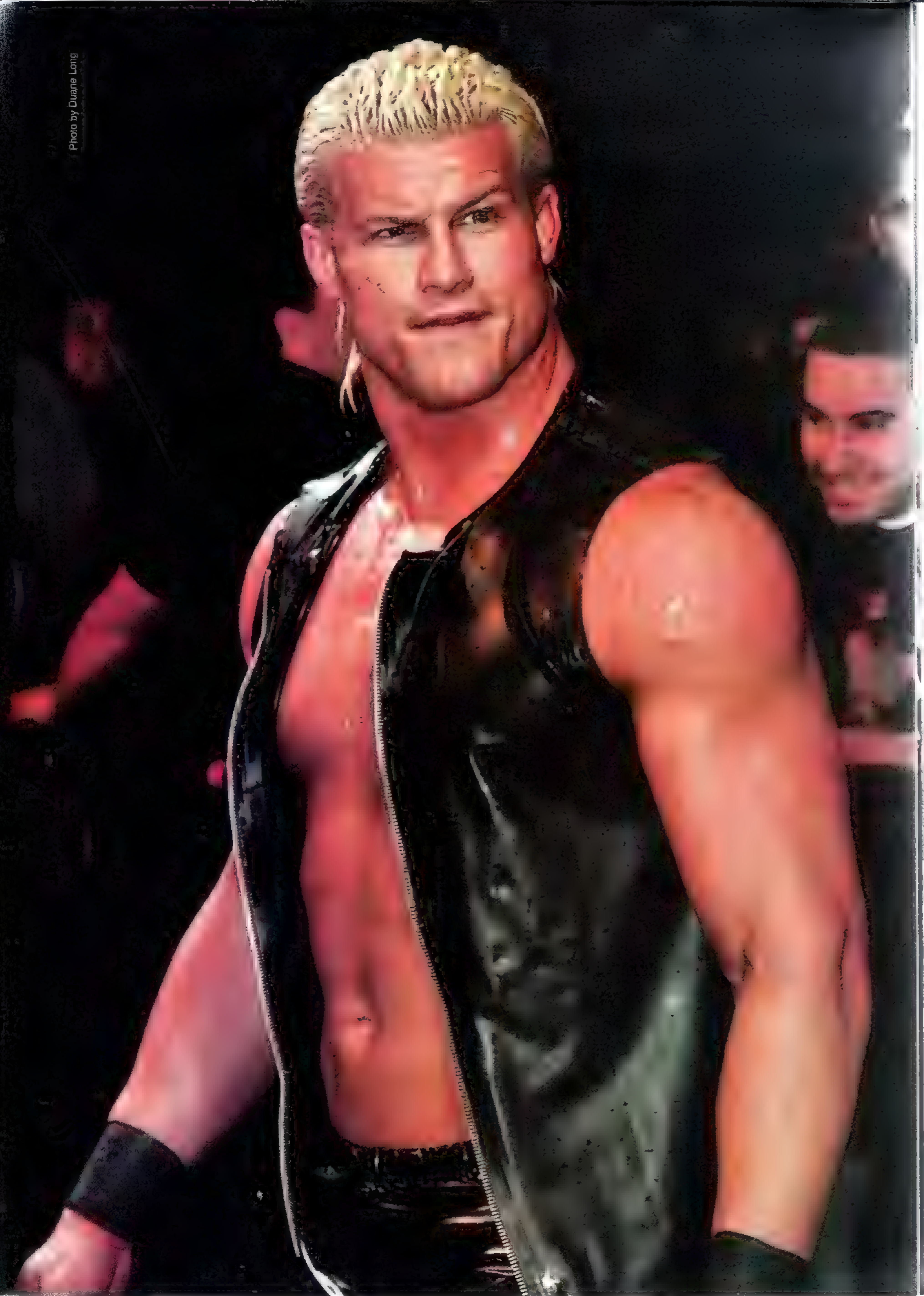
Four-Way Faceoff (PWI, December 2010)

2010 HIGHLIGHT: Defeating Kofi Kingston to win the Intercontinental championship in August

2010 LOWLIGHT: Beginning an ill-conceived romantic relationship with Vickie Guerrero. What was he thinking?

HOW OUR 2010 PREDICTION HELD UP: Ziggler was not included in last year's forecast issue.

2011 PROJECTED "PWI 500" RANKING: 28



WHAT'S AHEAD FOR AJ STYLES IN 2011?

At the start of 2010, AJ Styles was the TNA World champion. With big wins over Kurt Angle and Sting to his credit, Styles was emerging as TNA's franchise player. The editors of this magazine ranked him number one in the 2010 *PWI* 500.

For some reason, Styles wasn't able to sustain that success. After dropping the World title to Rob Van Dam, Styles quickly dropped out of World title contention, as Jeff Hardy, Kurt Angle, and Mr. Anderson leapfrogged past him. For the past few months, Styles has been content wearing the TV title. There's a sad irony in Styles holding the TV title. Both he and that championship have suffered with identity crises. The TV title was previously known as the Legends title, then the Global title. It has little prestige and even less history. It's almost a forgotten championship.

Styles should be contending for the World title. As the company's longest-landing homegrown star, Styles should be TNA's top singles star. Instead, Styles has become a mid-carder with a meaningless title belt. He has been "Phenomenal." He has been World champion. And now he's a supporting player once again.

We have been waiting for Styles to break out and achieve his true potential for years now. Perhaps what we're seeing now is what Styles is destined to be—an enormously talented mid-card performer who is capable of achieving brief runs on top until the company has someone it sees as an alternative in its midst.

Unless he breaks away from Fortune, Styles isn't likely to score any World title matches in 2011. Unfortunately, we don't see Styles standing up for himself and demanding title matches, either. Throughout his career, Styles has been too laidback and too passive. Just a year ago, he was considering retirement.

12-Month Story Index

How Ric Flair, Whoopie Goldberg, AJ Styles, and How Sting Will Get Him Back (The Wrestler/Inside Wrestling, Vol. 33, 2010)
Report Card (PWI, July 2010)
War Of The Decades (PWI, September 2010)
Wrestler of the Half-Year (PWI, September 2010)
"Phenomenal" AJ Styles Is TNA's First *PWI* 500® Winner (PWI, October 2010)
Best Of The Best (The Wrestler/Inside Wrestling, Vol. 35, 2010)
Four-Way Faceoff (PWI, December 2010)

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling



All that talent and so low on the card

Styles will ride the Fortune gravy train all year long. He'll have some exciting TV title defenses against Jay Lethal, Brutus Magnus, and Rob Terry, but he'll spend the year as a supporting player for Fortune and Immortal.

2010 HIGHLIGHT: Not only did Styles defeat Kurt Angle in a classic match at Genesis, but that was also the night he allied himself with Ric Flair, kicking off the most successful run of his career.

2010 LOWLIGHT: The loss to Jay Lethal at Slammiversary was a humbling moment for the former World champion.

HOW OUR 2010 PREDICTION HELD UP: Last year, we lamented Styles' inconsistency and predicted a long X division title run. He proved us wrong with the most impressive World title reign of his career. But it's a year later and we're still concerned about his inconsistency.

2011 PROJECTED *PWI* 500® RANKING: 26

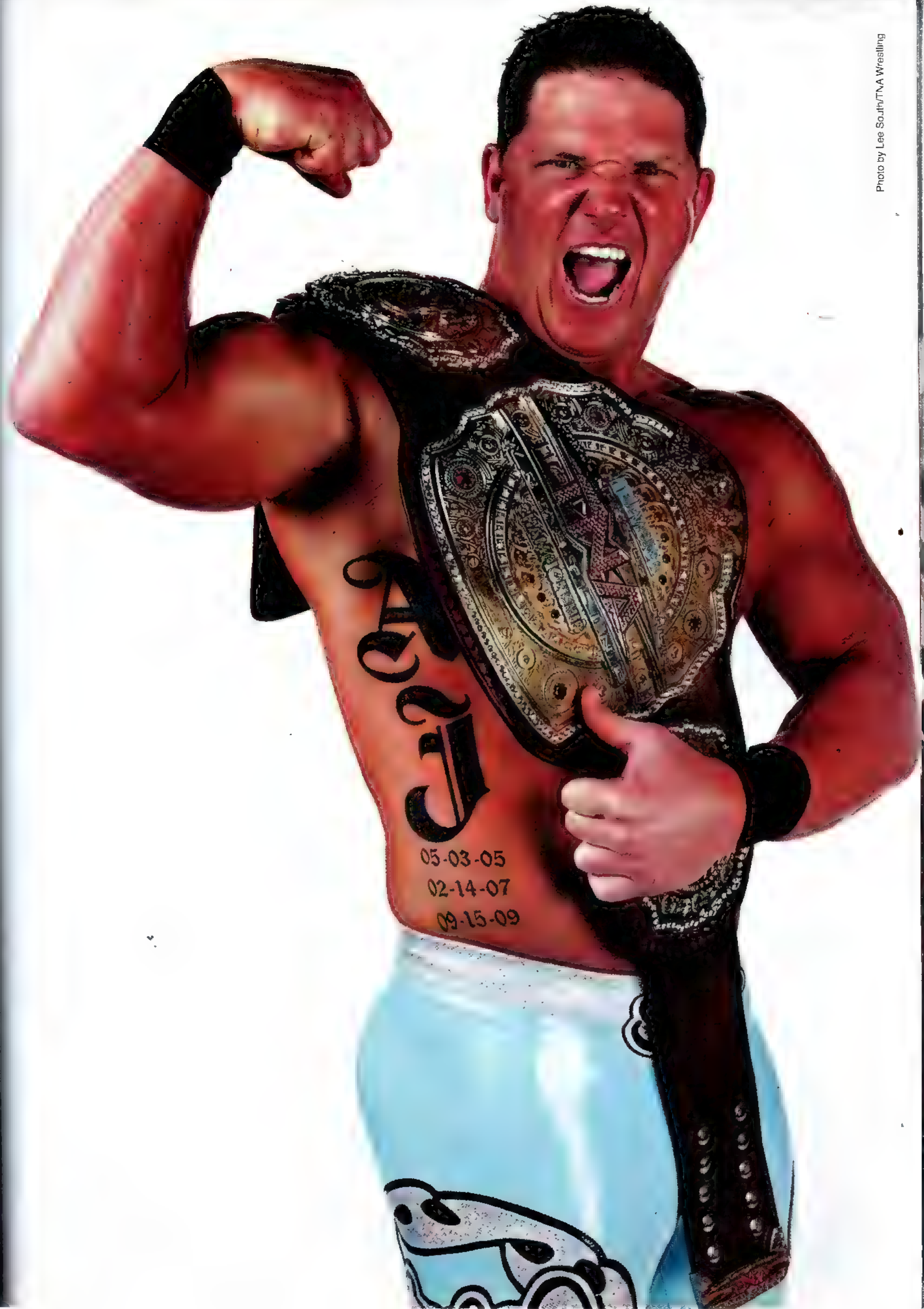


Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

WHAT'S AHEAD FOR BEER MONEY INC. IN 2011?

Robert Roode and James Storm are among the last of a dying breed. They are tag team specialists who have overcome the odds and managed to remain a team for more than two years.

Widely considered to be one of TNA's top acts, Roode and Storm have impressed the critics with their teamwork and perseverance, and they have earned a reputation for being consistent "show-stealers" with exciting and athletic ring work.

On paper, they would be the logical successors to Team 3-D. Like Team 3-D, they have shown a commitment to tag team wrestling and have developed a reputation as being one of wrestling's elite tandems. It would be logical to suggest that they will continue to be consistent workhorses and will capture another couple tag team championships in 2011.

But that's not what's going to happen.

Inevitably, the uneasy alliance between Fortune and Immortal is going to come crashing down, and Beer Money is going to find themselves on the front lines—and may not survive as a tandem.

Roode should remain loyal to Ric Flair. Both men appreciate the finer things in life, and Roode has always emulated Flair's right-hand man, Arn Anderson. Storm may be tempted to side with Hogan over Flair. Just ask Chris Harris about Storm's loyalty.

There's a chance that 2011 will see the split of Beer Money. Hogan, Eric Bischoff, and Jeff Jarrett have never placed much importance on tag team wrestling. As long as The Immortals and Fortune remained aligned, Storm and Roode will be pushed in different directions, which will strain—if not destroy—the team.

Another unspoken truth is that Storm and Roode have grown a bit stale as a team. Instead of contending for the tag team title, they have spent far too long mired in time-wasting feuds. They have looked



Beer or not, Storm and Roode need to juice up their act.

Uninspired and listless in recent months. The only hope for them to have a successful 2011 is if they make a clean break from Fortune now and get back into title contention. Serving as pawns for the likes of Hogan and Flair serves no purpose for them.

12-Month Story Index

Report Card (PWI July 2010)

2010 HIGHLIGHT: Winning the first two matches in the best-of-five series against The Motor City Machine Guns. A sweep seemed possible.

2010 LOWLIGHT: The sweep wasn't to be. Beer Money dropped the next three in a row, finally losing a best-of-three-falls bout that ended the series. That was a collapse of New York Mets proportions!

HOW OUR PREDICTION HELD UP: Beer Money was not included in last year's forecast issue.

2011 PROJECTED "PWI 500" RANKING: Roode, 42; Storm, 49.



WHAT'S AHEAD FOR CHRIS JERICO IN 2011?

Chris Jericho had another banner year in 2010. He opened the year as Raw's most hated wrestler, feuding with DeGeneration-X. After being banished from Raw, he won the World heavyweight title at No Way Out and successfully defended it against Edge at WrestleMania. After dropping the belt, Jericho went back to Raw, where he quickly reclaimed his position as the top heel on the brand, and was arguably the top in-ring performer of the year.

Jericho was inducted into the *Wrestling Observer* Hall of Fame this year, and his accomplishments over the past 12 months prove that he deserves to be counted among wrestling's all-time greats. He is a versatile competitor who succeeded on both Raw and Smackdown in 2010. He delivered several memorable matches and delivered terrific promos. He flirted with being a fan favorite leading up to SummerSlam, eliciting loud "Y2J" chants without even trying. Perhaps most importantly, he captured the fans' imagination. Whether he was building interest in upcoming matches, teasing retirement, or jockeying to get back on Raw, Jericho created compelling television and then backed it up with impressive matches.

As for the future, that is entirely up to Jericho. He claimed he would retire if he didn't capture the WWE championship at Night of Champions, though he later reneged on that promise. But a stiff punt from Randy Orton (which conveniently coincided with a planned Fozzy tour) has sent Jericho out of WWE. The door is open for his return, but with Jericho concentrating on music and writing the sequel to his autobiography, he may spend the entire year outside of wrestling. After all, the last time he went away, people expected



Photo by George Napolitano

Brutalizing Cena to stoke fans' ire

him to return within a couple months. He ended up spending more than two years away.

We don't expect that to happen this time. Jericho has been one of WWE's most valuable players for the past two years. With Undertaker, Rey Mysterio Jr., and Triple-H the subject of retirement rumors, WWE needs Jericho more than ever. Jericho may not need WWE, but he has a deep love for wrestling. He spent the first 10 years of his career being told he was too small to be a headliner. Now that he's arguably "the best in the world at what he does," we can't see him staying away for long. Expect a big return, a few more title reigns, and some great television.

12-Month Story Index

Report Card (PWI, July 2010)

"Dissecting WrestleMania 26" (PWI, August 2010)

"WrestleMania 26: The Real Winners & Losers" (*The Wrestler/Inside Wrestling*, Vol. 34, 2010)

"War Of The Decades" (PWI, September 2010)

"Best Of The Best" (*The Wrestler/Inside Wrestling*, Vol. 35, 2010)

"Four-Way Faceoff" (PWI, December 2010)

Capsule Profile (*The Wrestler/Inside Wrestling*, Vol. 35, 2010)

2010 HIGHLIGHT: Successfully defended the World title against Edge at WrestleMania 26.

2010 LOWLIGHT: Got knocked out by Mike Tyson on the January 11 edition of *Raw*.

HOW OUR 2010 PREDICTION HELD UP: We correctly predicted the feud with Edge, but were off base when we said that Jericho would spend the year chasing the U.S. title.

2011 PROJECTED "PWI 500" RANKING: 11



WHAT'S AHEAD FOR ABYSS IN 2011?

Abbyss may be a lunatic, but he is also a shrewd politician. The "Man-monster" used to be on very good terms with TNA President Dixie Carter (though kidnapping her and threatening her with Janice certainly strained that friendship) and now he's protected by Hulk Hogan himself. Abyss is a "made man" in the new Hogan/Eric Bischoff faction and he promises to be a loyal soldier for that group for the immediate future.

Whether you call him a mercenary, an enforcer, or a thug, Abyss' role remains the same. He is the muscle behind TNA's most powerful faction. That role suits him much better than his previous personas as the world's biggest Hulkamaniac or the perpetually confused, easily manipulated man-child.

Historically, Abyss has always been most productive when he has a manager or a trusted ally to guide him and help channel his aggression. With Hogan, Bischoff, and Jeff Jarrett at his side, Abyss becomes the most dangerous man in TNA—especially if he's given free rein to use his ghoulish weapons.

Abyss won't be contending for any championships in 2011. He will be a spoiler. Anyone looking to get shots at the World title will have to go through Abyss first, and that's no easy task. Expect the big man to spill plenty of blood (including his own) and inflict a lot of pain and suffering on TNA's top stars.

Given the egos involved with the alliance between They and Fortune, there promises to be plenty of volatility within that group. Don't expect Abyss to waver. He may be a monster by nature, but



Abyss will turn up the violence even higher in 2011.

he's a loyal monster. Hogan has removed his shackles, and Abyss will stand by Hogan's side until the very end. Hogan will name the targets and Abyss will seek and destroy.

Abyss is happiest when he doesn't have to think for himself. With Hogan in charge, Abyss can concentrate on torturing opponents. It's what he does best.

12-Month Story Index

"An Animal's Analysis: Chris Parks' Friends Have Led Him To The Abyss!" (PWI, September 2010)

"Four-Way Face-Off" (PWI, December 2010)

Capsule Profile (The Wrestling Insider Wrestling, Vol. 36, 2010)

2010 HIGHLIGHT: Beating Ric Flair on the April 26 edition of *Impact* to win possession of Flair's precious Hall of Fame ring.

2010 LOWLIGHT: Quaking in fear at the prospect of being fired once Eric Bischoff joined TNA. If not for Hogan, Bischoff would have forced Abyss to remove his mask before booting him out of TNA.

HOW OUR 2010 PREDICTION HELD UP: Abyss was not included in last year's forecast.

2011 PROJECTED "PWI 500" RANKING: 20

UNIVERSITY



RANDY ORTON **V**

PWI's Special

THEY MADE THEIR professional debuts 31 days apart in early-2000 and have been compared ever since. Beginning with their developmental training in Ohio Valley Wrestling, their paths have criss-crossed for a decade. They have wrestled against each other and with each other, and their relationship remains the same as it did when they first met. There is no love between John Cena and Randy Orton, but, whether they care to admit it publicly or not, there is a healthy dose of respect.

Who is better? It's kind of hard to say. After countless matches, any reasonable conclusion would be that we'd have to see more matches before we can reach a reasonable conclusion. Lately, they've teamed up more than they've wrestled, but, Nexus aside, a war could break out between these two greats at any time.

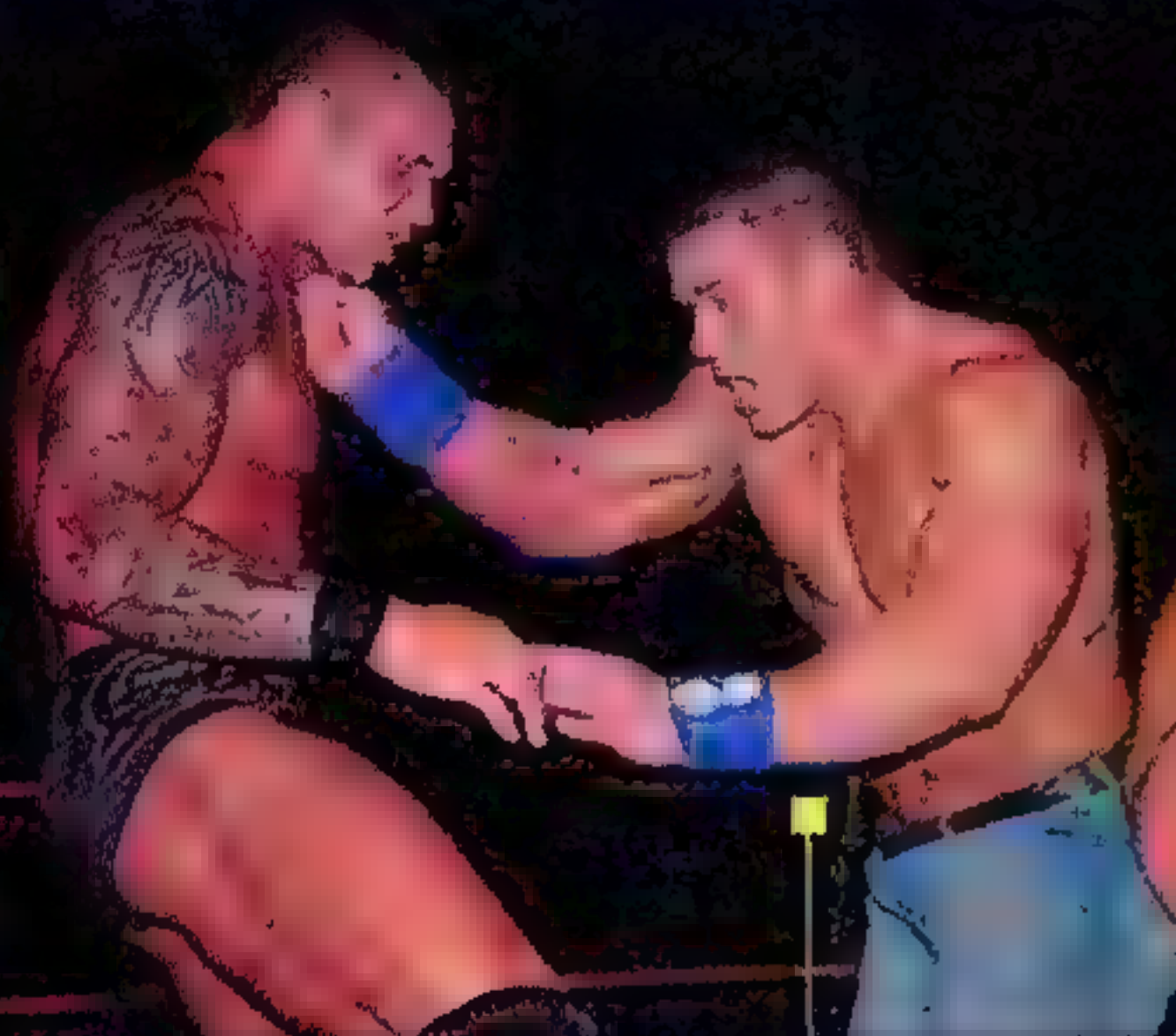
For now, let's have some fun with one of the great rivalries of our time. As we did with The Rock and Triple-H (November 2000) ironically during the same year Cena and Orton made their pro debuts, *PWI* has matched up Cena and Orton in 50 categories and determined which man gets the nod in each. At the end, we tally the results and reveal the winner.

Photo by Wayne McCarty

VS JOHN CENA

50-Category Analysis

Photo by George Napolitano



ARMS

CENA ☒

ORTON ☐

LEGS

CENA ☐

ORTON ☒

ABS

CENA ☐

ORTON ☒

Photo by George Napolitano

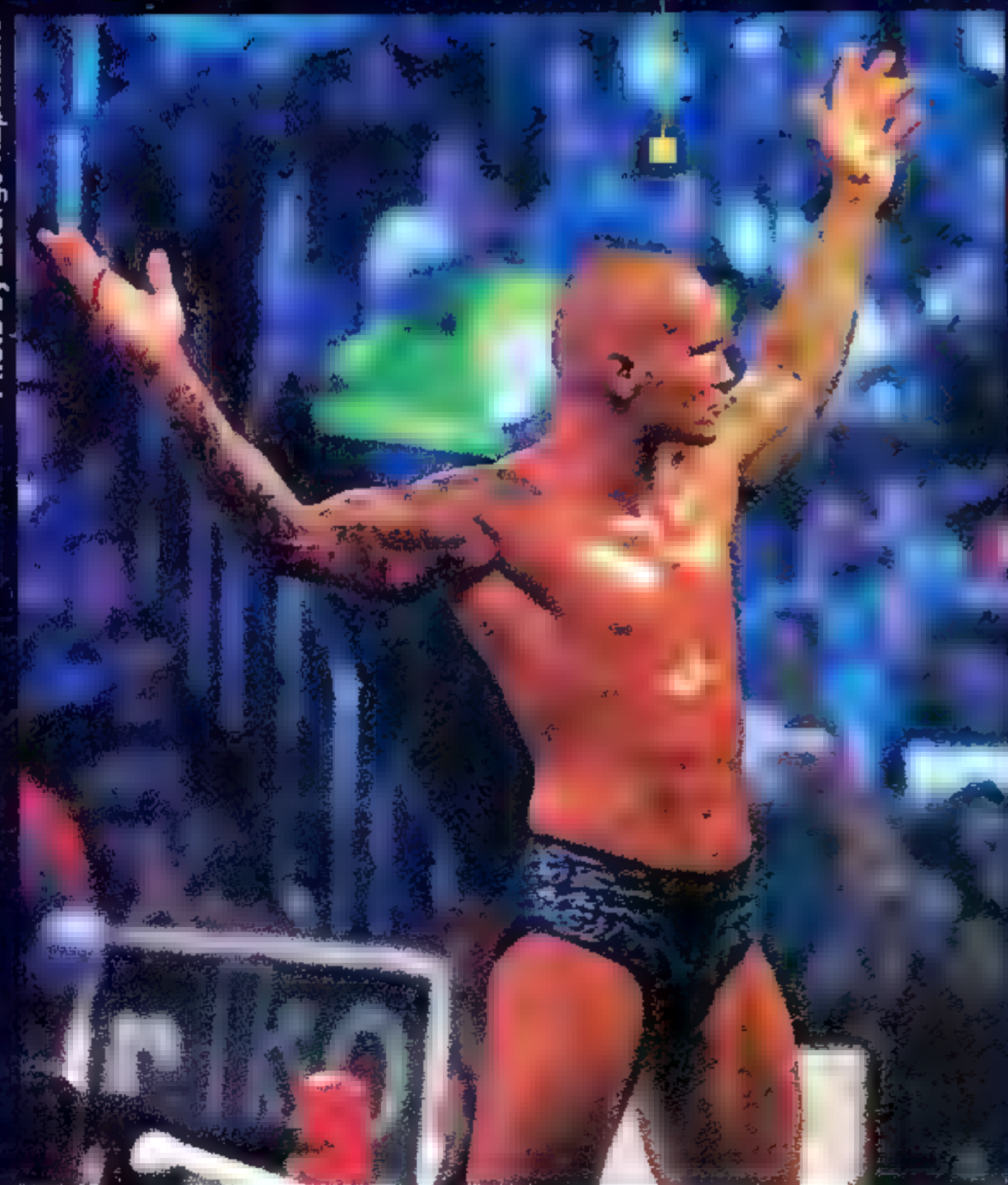


Photo by George Napolitano





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PECS

CENA ☒

ORTON ☐

BACK

CENA ☒

ORTON ☐

SHOULDERS

CENA ☒

ORTON ☐

LOOKS

CENA ☐

ORTON ☒

SPEED

CENA ☐

ORTON ☒

COUNTER-WRESTLING

CENA ☐

ORTON ☒

DEFENSE

CENA ☒

ORTON ☐

FAN SUPPORT

CENA ☒

ORTON ☐

COMPANY STROKE

CENA ☒

ORTON ☐

ABILITY TO ABSORB PUNISHMENT

CENA ☐

ORTON ☐

GRACE UNDER PRESSURE

CENA ☒

ORTON ☐

SHOWMANSHIP

CENA ☒

ORTON ☐

SEX APPEAL

CENA ☐

ORTON ☒

MARKETABILITY

CENA ☒

ORTON ☐

PEER SUPPORT

CENA ☐

ORTON ☒

TRUSTWORTHINESS

CENA ☒

ORTON ☐

LEADERSHIP

CENA ☒

ORTON ☐



Photo by George Napolitano

BUTT

CENA ☐

ORTON ☒

PERSONALITY

CENA ☒

ORTON ☐

FASHION SENSE

CENA ☐

ORTON ☒

MICROPHONE SKILLS

CENA ☒

ORTON ☐

FINISHING MANEUVERS

CENA ☐

ORTON ☒

OVERALL REPERTOIRE

CENA ☐

ORTON ☒

STAMINA

CENA ☐

ORTON ☒

POWER

CENA ☒

ORTON ☐

DURABILITYCENA ☒ ORTON ☐**SENSE OF HUMOR**CENA ☒ ORTON ☐**CAREER ACCOMPLISHMENTS**CENA ☒ ORTON ☐**IMPACT ON THE SPORT (PAST)**CENA ☒ ORTON ☐**IMPACT ON THE SPORT (FUTURE)**CENA ☒ ORTON ☐**HARDCORE SKILLS**CENA ☐ ORTON ☒**INTELLIGENCE**CENA ☐ ORTON ☒**RING GENERALSHIP**CENA ☐ ORTON ☒**RING ENTRANCE**CENA ☒ ORTON ☐**RESOURCEFULNESS**CENA ☐ ORTON ☒**VERSATILITY**CENA ☐ ORTON ☒

Photo by George Napolitano

**INTENSITY**CENA ☐ ORTON ☒**STREET CRED**CENA ☒ ORTON ☐**MAINSTREAM SUCCESS**CENA ☒ ORTON ☐**WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS**CENA ☒ ORTON ☐**"PWI 500"**

CAREER AVERAGE

CENA ☒ ORTON ☐**ADAPTABILITY**CENA ☐ ORTON ☒**COURAGE**CENA ☒ ORTON ☐**HEART**CENA ☒ ORTON ☐**PATIENCE**CENA ☐ ORTON ☐**MEDIA RELATIONS**CENA ☐ ORTON ☐**HUMILITY**CENA ☒ ORTON ☐**FINAL TALLY:**

CENA WINS, 31-19.

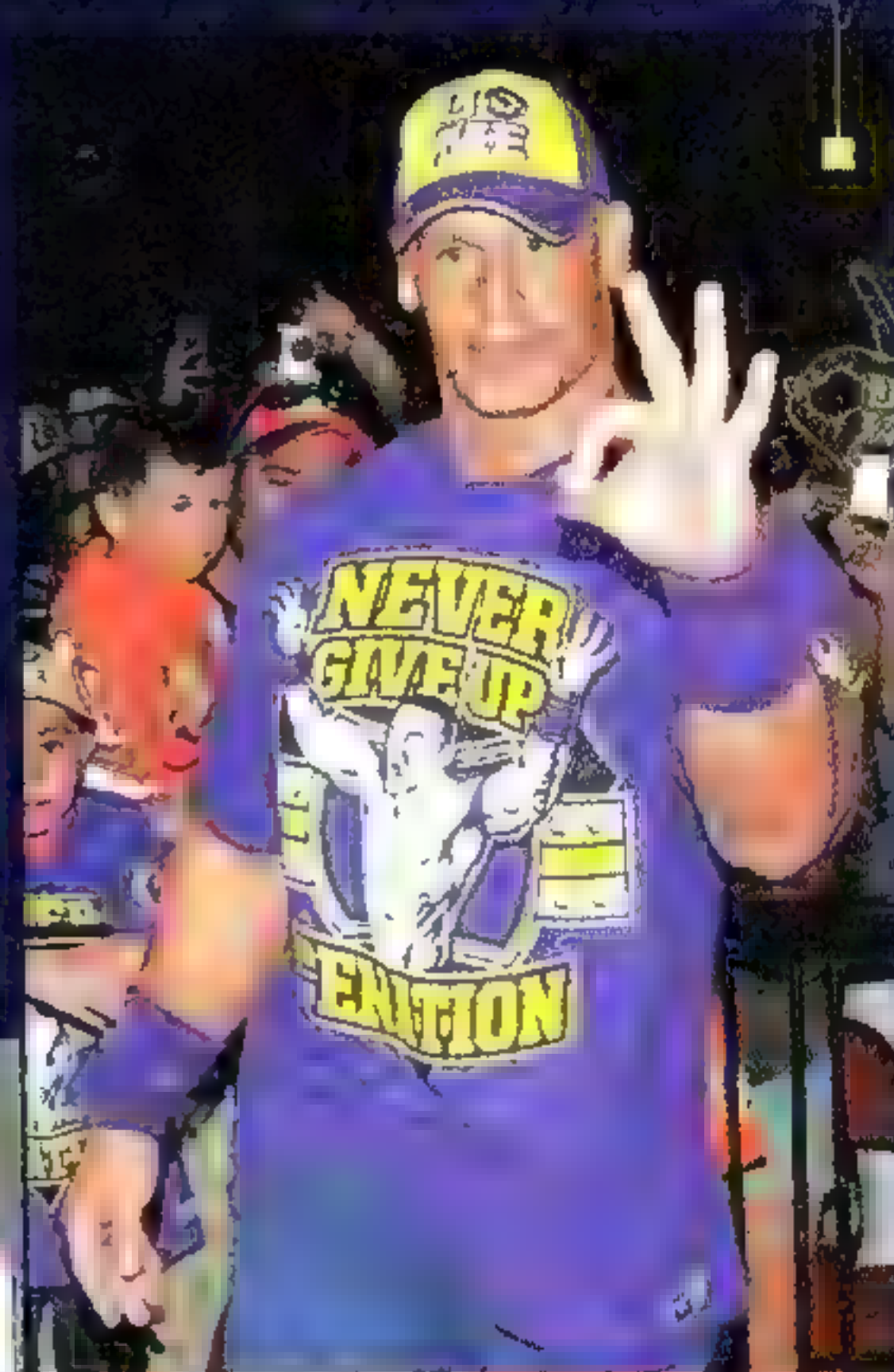


Photo by George Napolitano

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THE BUSINESS PAGE

BY HARRY BURKETT



Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

What better way to sell some potato chips than by putting one of the sexiest women in wrestling on the bag? Tom's Snacks definitely made a good call by having Velvet Sky grace their packages.

Call it bad timing ... As Linda McMahon headed into the homestretch of her bid for the U.S. Senate, the campaign trail took a turn that she didn't appreciate, with opponent Richard Blumenthal's truth-telling abilities no longer being the focus of media scrutiny ... and the business practices of WWE becoming front and center. It is clear that McMahon's attempt to become Connecticut's junior senator garnered unwanted media attention on the company she helped build and earned her more than a few enemies.

Unfortunately for McMahon, there were a number of developments in mid-October that combined to take her off-couse. Those news items were:

- Lance Cade's autopsy revealed that he died from a mixture of drugs and an enlarged heart.

- Jim Neidhart's arrest due to his theft of a neighbor's prescribed Oxycontin supply continued to receive coverage.

- The Taylor Hooton Foundation, an anti-steroids organization, criticized WWE's Wellness Policy.

- The *Hartford Courant*, the most influential newspaper in Connecticut, published a story on prescription drug addiction in WWE.

- Connecticut's Department of Labor launched an investigation of WWE's classification of talent as independent contractors.

The last item is the most damaging because it goes to the heart of how WWE does business. WWE's use of the independent contractor classification implies that C.M. Punk can freely accept a date with Ring of Honor on his day off, or that Randy Orton can hop over and do a TNA pay-per-view if he has a spare Sunday. By classifying its talent as independent contractors, WWE isn't held responsible for withholding taxes, doesn't have to pay Social Security, and avoids pressure to provide health insurance.

Although WWE spokesman Robert Zimmerman didn't offer a substantive response to these al-

legations, his questioning of the probe's timing did seem appropriate. "Up until this election, WWE has not been fined nor investigated in the past for the independent contractor classification," he stated. "However, curiously, the state of Connecticut is currently conducting an audit of WWE's classification of independent contractors."

And leave it to Jesse Ventura to chime in at the opportune time. "There's no unions, no health care, and everybody is hired as an independent contractor," he told the *Hartford Courant* while promoting his truTV series, *Conspiracy Theory*. "How do they get away with calling me an independent contractor and yet I have to sign an exclusivity contract? ... Why does the government let them off the hook?"

WWE then released a statement touting all the politicians who've praised the company in the past. The same statement was posted on wwe.com, complete with the smiling faces of Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton, and John McCain. Interestingly, President Obama has specifically targeted companies that abuse the independent contractor statute.

TNA's snack attack ... AJ Styles and Velvet Sky appeared on behalf of TNA at the National Association of Convenience Stores' annual convention in Atlanta. As part of a cross-promotion between TNA and Lance-owned Tom's Snacks, Styles, Velvet, Rob Van Dam, D'Angelo Dinero, and Mr. Anderson will appear on the packaging of five "Thick And Bold" flavors starting in December. Tom's Snacks will also have a contest in which a lucky winner can win a "TNA contract for a day."

Styles and Velvet deserve credit for being excellent TNA representatives and doing their best to cut promos about Tom's Snacks. "I'll be on the back of the 'Original' flavor packaging because I'm the 'Phenomenal One,' the guy who's been here since the beginning,"

said Styles. Added Velvet Sky, "No wonder Tom's chose me to be on the Hot Fries bag, because it's hot and spicy, and I'm the hottest Knockout in TNA!"

What professionals!

HDNet channel listings update ... An agreement with Comcast has enabled HDNet to expand into some key new markets, most notably ROH's hometown of Philadelphia, where it is available on channel 897. Additional cities include Chicago, Illinois (channel 289 and 291); Rockford, Illinois (channel 928); Salem and Quincy, Massachusetts (channel 928); Seattle, Washington (channel 707); Portland, Oregon (channel 798); and San Francisco, California (channel 784).

That should give TV champ Ed-die Edwards plenty of notoriety!

WWE STOCKWATCH

[For the period of August 16 to October 15, 2010]

60-Day High: 14.58 on September 10

60-Day Low: 13.24 on October 5

52-Week High: 18.95 on April 26, 2010

52-Week Low: 12.86 on May 6, 2010

WWE stock remained steady during our two-month evaluation period, but investors probably won't appreciate the fact that Vince McMahon used the resources of WWE to blatantly promote his wife's Senate bid in the waning days of that campaign. Bristling at political opponents' criticisms of his wife and WWE, McMahon issued a somewhat snarky press release inviting First Lady Michelle Obama to WWE Headquarters to discuss the company's outreach initiatives, including the Make-A-Wish Foundation, the Muscular Dystrophy Association, and the Young Adult Library Services Association.

In addition, WWE scheduled a Fan Appreciation Day for October 30 in—of all places—Hartford, Connecticut. Tickets for the Raw/Smackdown SuperShow were set for only \$20 for floor seating and only \$10 for upper- and lower-level seating. McMahon touted WWE's long history in Stamford, Connecticut—its home since 1983—as the reason for the celebration.

Now that WWE is hopefully putting politics behind, let's make a quick mention of what it does best: marketing. WWE and its video-game licensee, THQ, will be releasing *Smackdown vs. Raw 2011*, with cover art targeting specific demographics in various parts of the world. Canada will receive cover art featuring Bret Hart, Edge, and The Undertaker, while the Latin market will get Rey Mysterio Jr., Triple-H, and The Undertaker.

We understand The Undertaker's universal appeal, but we're still not sure about Triple-H's Latino cred.

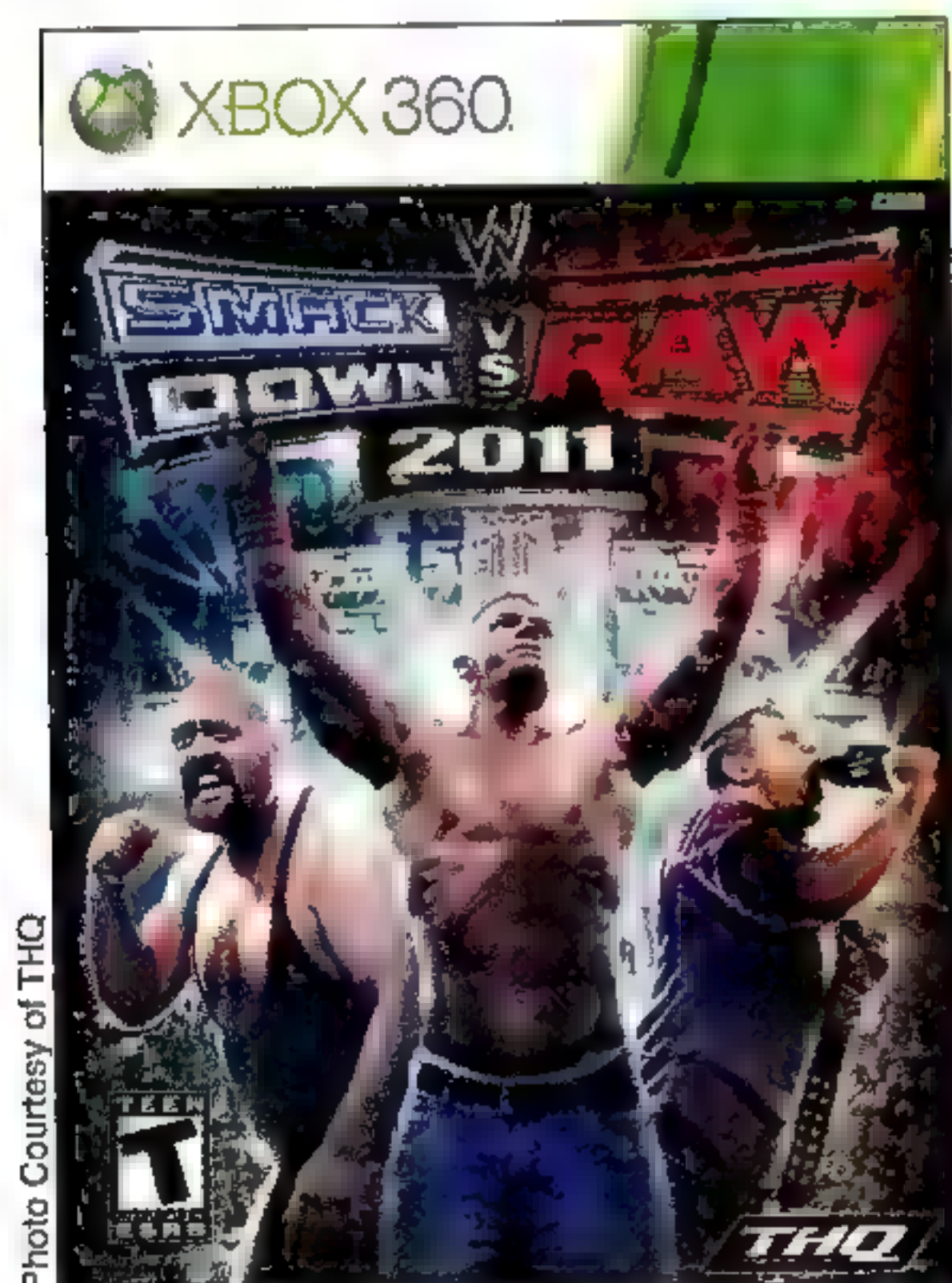


Photo Courtesy of THQ

THQ and WWE have produced yet another edition of *WWE Smackdown vs. Raw*. The 2011 version marks the 10-year anniversary of the acclaimed video game.

TV BREAKDOWN

RAW [USA]

Wrestlers	20
Guests	10
Segments	10
Matches	10
Specials	10
Other	10
Total	100

Analysis: *Raw* earned a 3.5 for its 900th episode on August 30, but it turned out to be a show that often flashed back to the past rather than move storylines forward. Yet that was the only bright spot over the past two months, with WWE chalking up *Raw*'s declining ratings to strong competition from *Monday Night Football* on ESPN. While it's true the Green Bay Packers-Chicago Bears game was the fifth most-watched cable event in history and was a key factor for *Raw*'s drop to an embarrassing 2.7, not all of *Raw*'s woes are because of football. *Raw*'s ratings averaged a half-point lower in the early-fall, compared to the same period last year. Plummeting to the 2.7-2.9 range indicates the need for major Creative changes. John Cena becoming an enthusiastic member of The Nexus perhaps?

SMACKDOWN [MyNetworkTV/Syfy]

Wrestlers	20
Guests	10
Segments	10
Matches	10
Specials	10
Other	10
Total	100

Analysis: Although it was believed that *Smackdown* couldn't do any worse than on MyNetworkTV, the move to Syfy hasn't resulted in blockbuster numbers either. In fact, the ratings for *Smackdown*'s premiere on Syfy were actually lower than the blue brand's premiere on MyNetworkTV two years earlier—a 1.7, compared to a 1.9. The bright side is *Smackdown*'s numbers have been increasing ever so slightly since its October 1 premiere, rising from a 1.7 to a 1.9 as the feud between World heavyweight champion Kane and The Undertaker heated up with the arrival of Paul Bearer. Yet it must be noted that even proponents of an undisputed WWE World title were disappointed when World champ Kane was booked to face WWE champ Randy Orton on the October 22 edition with only a few days' buildup. That's not synergy; that's just silly.

NXT [Syfy]

Wrestlers	20
Guests	10
Segments	10
Matches	10
Specials	10
Other	10
Total	100

Analysis: In terms of pure ratings numbers, the *NXT* experiment was a disappointment. *ECW* rarely garnered less than a 1.0 in the same time slot, usually scoring between 1.1 and 1.3. *NXT* scored consistently within the 0.8-1.0 range, plummeting to a 0.7 in its final episode on Syfy. Even the Season Two finale featuring Kaval's win earned only a 1.0. Only a couple of episodes into Season Three, WWE had turned the entire affair into a joke, with Vickie Guerrero becoming the centerpiece of the show and co-hosts Michael Cole and Josh Mathews—and guest commentator C.M. Punk—ridiculing the show before its run on Syfy was over. But for those of you who actually miss this season of *NXT*, the torture is streamed weekly on wwe.com and continues to be televised outside the United States.

IMPACT [Spike]

Wrestlers	20
Guests	10
Segments	10
Matches	10
Specials	10
Other	10
Total	100

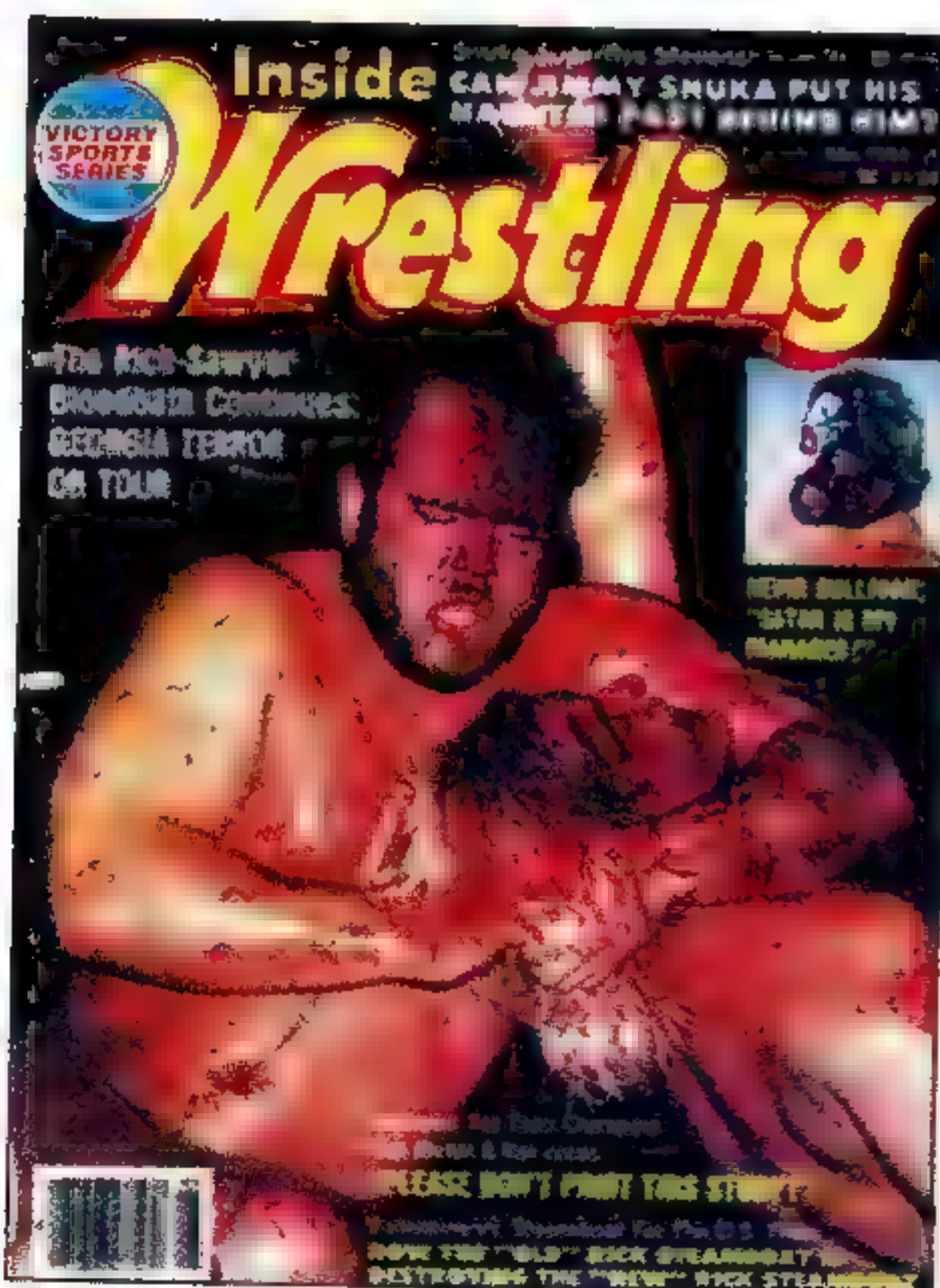
Analysis: Will Hollywood Hogan's Immortal be the rocket fuel that takes *Impact* to the next level? By itself, no. But the fallout from Bound for Glory; Eric Bischoff's double-crossing of Dixie Carter, and the subsequent formation of Hogan's Immortal—with new World champion Jeff Hardy, Abyss, and the entire Fortune faction as members—should receive the credit for boosting *Impact* to its highest rating since January 28. And that's one point higher than the decent rating *Impact* scored on a special live edition airing three days before Bound for Glory. This is a pivotal moment: Now that TNA has captured the fans' attention, is the company truly bound for glory ... or is this just another convoluted Russo swerve?

WIN, LOSE, OR DRAW

BY HARRY BURKETT

WHAT'S GOING TO happen to my classic WWF trading cards, complete with 25-year-old unchewed gum? What about my WCW Slam-A-Rama Wrestling Game? Will my "Diamond" Dallas Page bobble-head find a proper home? And, oh my goodness, what will become of the centerpiece of my collection, my 1,500-piece magazine archive?

These concerns raced through my mind after just a brief exchange with my girlfriend Debbie one day. We were having another one of those "what she would do if Harry dropped dead tomorrow" conversations—the number of which have reached an uncomfortable level as of late.



The cover of *Inside Wrestling* May 1983 was truly one of the most memorable covers in our history. Senior Writer Harry Burkett just doesn't understand why more people don't see the value in it.

This time around, I was busily typing away to meet another *PWI* deadline that was already long past. Sort of in a huff, she says, "You can't take all this with you after you're dead—you know that, right?"

With a slightly perturbed expression on her face, she pointed at the two bookcases packed with stacks of wrestling magazines. See, when I think of my heralded wrestling magazine collection, I think of my rare Fall 1961 copy of *Wrestling Illustrated*, with Ray Shires cinching up a side headlock on Lou Bastien. I think of the Winter 1978 issue of *Wrestling Yearbook*, which featured the life story of Dusty Rhodes and a nice cover with Rhodes hugging a

"common man" while celebrating what was assumed to be a WWWF title victory over Superstar Graham—a decision that was reversed almost immediately, making us and that common man the victims of a classic "Dusty finish." And I don't understand why no one would think my May 1983 issue of *Inside Wrestling* is valuable. Where else can you find a cover photo of Buzz Sawyer and Tommy Rich dripping in so much blood, complete with an inset shot of a demonic Kevin Sullivan?

And I think of all those classic portrait covers of *PWI* from the early-1980s: Mil Mascaras, Harley Race, Rick Martel, Greg Valentine, The Road Warriors, Ted DiBiase, Jerry Lawler, and Kerry Von Erich—all of them regal in their studio splendor. Many of

these issues catch a pretty penny on eBay. The only one I'm missing is the May 1983 issue with Jimmy Snuka on the cover. In a rare act of self-sacrifice, I actually gave that issue to Jimmy Valiant because I thought he'd appreciate the full-color pin-up of himself on the inside. After all, I was a card-carrying member of the Boogie Woogie Brigade and I know I still have that card stashed around here somewhere near my Bob Backlund-autographed postcard ...

"Look at this mess! Your shelves are about to give out!"

Debbie's complaint brought me back to reality. Although I spend many hours in my home "office" every week, I really took notice of the bookcases for the first time, focusing intently as if I were trying on a new pair of glasses. Suddenly those classic issues of *PWI* didn't seem so glamorous anymore.

When you're looking at piles of magazines from across a room, you're basically just looking at stacks of paper—not the covers. But this was no disorganized mess. I have all my magazines meticulously stacked from newest to oldest in descending order. So, like a geologist studying layers of bedrock, I can tell how old a magazine is by the shade of paper. That stack is post-2001 because the slick paper doesn't age nearly as quickly. The yellowish newsprint paper is 1990s, and the dark brown stuff is the 1980s and '70s. It didn't help that I kept those mags by a window when I was a kid. I should've really invested in those fancy *PWI* binders they sold back in the '80s.

Then I looked at the shelves. They were actually bowing under the weight of the magazines. They looked as if they could break through at any moment. Debbie grabbed a box of NWO Valentine cards and shook them at me. "What are you ever gonna do with *these*?"

"You don't really expect me to throw these away, do you?" I asked. I carefully opened the box.

If only I had a pair of those special white gloves they use to handle the Bill of Rights at the National Archives. Gee whiz, what says "I love you" more than the pouty mime-face of Sting, the cocky assuredness of Bret Hart, or the sneer of Hollywood Hogan? Debbie's lucky she didn't get one of these for Valentine's Day 1998. Then again, that would have broken up the set. And I've never lived down that Randy Savage-themed cake I brought home for her birthday that year.

Debbie opened the closet and grabbed a nice-looking portrait in a clear plastic frame. Ah, the *PWI* Fotozine that I had purchased at a souvenir shop during a family trip to Florida. Remember when you could have your picture taken and have it "appear" on the cover of a popular magazine? There I was, brandishing a chain with a *PWI* headline touting me as "Wrestler Of The Year!" Coincidentally, my mother appeared on the cover of *Newsweek* that very week.

"I know what's going to happen to all this stuff after you're gone—don't worry, I'll take care of it!"

My wrestling-themed life flashed before my eyes. "No, you don't mean ..."

"That's right! This stuff is gonna hit the fire. Your place is going to be cleaned out once and for all!"

I knew all about Debbie's backyard bonfires. Those pre-2001 magazines would burn like instant matchlight charcoal. I can just imagine the floating mix of newsprint and ash. Austin Idol's charred face ...

And we hadn't even discussed my videotape collection. I remember proposing an ambitious project to former Editor-in-Chief Dave Lenker many years ago. I would tape as many episodes of *Raw* and *Nitro* as I could, put them away for 10 years, watch them again, and discuss the whole experiment in my column. "That sounds like a lot of work for one column," stated Dave at the time. He was right. I



With this many wrestling collectibles, you'd think Harry's house would be locked down tighter than Fort Knox. Luckily, we were able to grab a picture without security knowing. Hopefully, he can find a box big enough for both him and all his prized possessions when the time comes.

taped all of those episodes and now I have about 200 VHS tapes in stacks in an upstairs bedroom. Phase One of the project was a success. Phase Two, where I was supposed to open the vault again and watch them, fell short. Back in 1997, I hadn't anticipated the historical WWE DVDs, WWE Classics, or YouTube. My VCR doesn't even work anymore.

This entire incident made me rethink my priorities. Maybe I'd become Fred Sanford delusional, trying to make an empire out of a pile of junk. It reminded me of that old movie *The Enchanted Cottage*, where a disfigured vet and a homely maid fell in love, each

believing the other to be beautiful because of the mystical spell inside the cottage. Some people see frayed magazines and dust-collecting action figures. I see Ric Flair in his 10-pounds-of-gold glory and Magnum T.A. before he crashed his Porsche.

Reading about wrestling and writing about wrestling has become my enchanted world. I'm not going to change that, no matter how much well-intentioned nagging I must bear.

To paraphrase Fred G. Sanford, "Elizabeth, this is the big one, and I'm comin' to join you, honey ... and I'm bringin' my *PWI* mags with me!" □

THE STRAIGHT SHOOTER

BY DAN MURPHY

EIGHT YEARS AGO, I attended the inaugural induction ceremony of the Professional Wrestling Hall of Fame and Museum, a Schenectady, New York-based organization dedicated to preserving pro wrestling history in a respectful and dignified fashion.

If you had asked then if I thought the PWHF would still be going strong today, I would have expressed cautious optimism, but not a lot of confidence. That's not a knock on the Hall's founding fathers or supporters, but an honest appraisal based on the state of the economy in New York. In a state wracked by unemployment and heavy taxes, there's simply not a lot of funding for a labor of love like a pro wrestling hall of fame and museum, not in the public sector

and not in the private sector.

But I'm happy to report that the PWHF is still going strong. One of the reasons for the hall's survival has been fundraising events such as Titans in Toronto, a dinner and reunion held to benefit the PWHF.

The fourth Titans in Toronto event took place on September 18 (previous Titans events were held in 2004, 2006, and 2008). Presented by Magen Boys Entertainment and SLAM! Wrestling, the event drew dozens of ring veterans, current Canadian indy standouts, managers, media, and fans.

Long-time *PWI* columnist Brandi Mankiewicz would appreciate the fact that I got lost on my way to the event, considering my poor directional skills were one of several of my defects she so enjoyed belittling. But, like a true road warrior, I

eventually found The Factory in Vaughan, Ontario, where I hastily greeted the host for the event, SLAM!'s Greg Oliver, and hustled for the bathroom to empty 24 ounces of Tim Horton's coffee from my bladder (it had been a long drive).

Now safely at the venue and no longer doing a pee-pee dance, I was able to get the lay of the land. To my left, the sensational, intelligent Destroyer was walking into the room, accompanied by his wife, Wilma #2 (twice married, both of his wives have been named Wilma; what are the odds?). To my right, Dominic DeNucci was shaking hands with Tiger Jeet Singh. Johnny Powers was chatting up former WWE referee Jimmy Korderas. Midgets Farmer Pete and Frenchy Lamont were paging through scrapbooks of old photos and news clippings, assembled by Canadian "super-fan" Terry Dart. Rick Martel, who could still pass for a model today, was sipping red wine and conversing in French with a contingent of wrestlers from Quebec.

The current indy stars in attendance seemed humbled by the assemblage of old-time greats. The last time I saw "Bloody" Bill Skullion, he was a crimson mess, sucking down bottles of beer after a show. On this night, his usual grimace was replaced by a genuine ear-to-ear smile, like a kid on Christmas morning. Rob "El Fuego" Etcheverria—who deserves credit for training roughly a third of the women in this year's "*PWI* Female 50"—looked dapper and refined, as did Asylum, one-half of Ontario's top tag team, The Flatliners.

After a lot of visiting and reminiscing, Oliver herded everyone into their seats for dinner. I ended up at a table with Martel and a group of French Canadians. Whenever the conversation broke into French, Martel was kind enough to translate for me, probably to assure me that everyone else wasn't talking about me.



Though they had little in common during their wrestling days, Tiger Ali Singh, Tiger Jeet Singh, and Dominic DeNucci put their differences aside to assemble at the fourth Titans in Toronto dinner and celebrate wrestling's rich past and raise money for the Pro Wrestling Hall of Fame and Museum.

Photo by Mike Mastrandrea/SLAM! Wrestling



The classy Rick Martel served as an informal host and translator to Dan Murphy, who trekked from Buffalo to Toronto to show his support for the Pro Wrestling Hall of Fame and Museum.

After dinner, Oliver invited several of the attendees to share some stories and words of wisdom. The Destroyer told a well-worn story about Andre the Giant finishing off two cases of beer during a two-hour drive with The Destroyer through Illinois (relax, The Destroyer was driving). Apparently Andre's bladder was much better than mine, since he never needed a bathroom break.

Martel took the microphone and asked The Hungarian Wolfman to stand up. "My second week in wrestling, I was 17, in the Maritimes, and they had me working The Wolfman every night for a week," Martel said. "It was strict kayfabe back then and the baby-faces never got to talk to the heels. It may have taken 38 years, but I can finally say thank you for taking care of me out there." When Martel and Wolfman hugged, from where I was sitting, it looked like The Wolfman had a tear in his eye.

"The fourth Titans in Toronto dinner definitely ran the smoothest of them all," Oliver said after the event. "All the talent I was expecting showed up, everyone

had a great time, and I'm already being bugged about when the next one will be."

Oliver was all over the place, collecting ticket money at the door, emceeing the event, working the room ... hell, he may have cooked the chicken, for all I know. I asked him what his personal highlight of the night was.

"The highs of the night come when friends who haven't seen each other in 30 or 40 years reunite, and I made it happen," he said. "It's an incredibly rewarding feeling. Often, I get calls afterward thanking me for making it happen. From a personal standpoint, it is very meaningful that someone will drive five or six hours, or fly themselves in from Tokyo or Quebec City for a dinner that I am helping to run."

Wrestling has a rich and fascinating past. We're lucky to have an organization like the PWHF dedicated to preserving that history, and the PWHF is lucky to have people like Oliver and the Magen Boys to put on fundraising events like Titans in Toronto to keep it going strong. □

DON'T MISS

"THE TURN" WITH FRANK INGLOS

EXCLUSIVELY ON:
pwi-online.com

Inglos On Ben Roethlisberger's Raw Appearance:

"It's one thing to get the publicity you're craving, and it's something completely different to get it at the expense of your own industry's eyelash-thin credibility. Guess what, WWE: They weren't presenting Roethlisberger's appearance as a legitimate sports story. No, they were not laughing with you, they were laughing completely, totally, 100 percent at you."

Inglos On Hulk Hogan in TNA:

"Okay, stop me if you've heard this one: Ric Flair, Hulk Hogan, Eric Bischoff, Jeff Hardy, Jeff Jarrett, Orlando Jordan, Scott Hall, Sean Waltman, Shannon Moore, Val Venis, Bubba the Love Sponge, and The Nasty Boys walk into a bar, which proceeds to collapse upon itself because you've actually entered the fourth level of hell."

Inglos On Donald Trump's "Ownership" Of Raw:

"Still, I think my favorite part is how they're literally playing up the notion that Donald Trump has been a wrestling fan his whole life. Listen, he's only as big a fan as his options allow. Were Dana White to come calling (which he wouldn't), 'The Donald' would have been a 'huge MMA' fan all of his life. Hell, if *Covergirl* called, he'd go on record as being a huge fan of makeup his whole life. He's a businessman; it's what they do."

Inglos on the January 4 Impact-Raw Showdown:

"WWE countered Hogan's debut with, easily, the biggest return in the company's history by having Bret Hart serve as guest host. Sure, the rest of the show was painful to watch but, hey, who expects the writers to focus on the other 80 minutes of broadcasting, right?"

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You're at the airport. You see your favorite wrestler relaxing in one of the terminals. You rush up to him or her as questions fill your excited mind. There are certain things you just have to know about this person. Well, these are the **12 questions** you'd never think of asking.

12 QUESTIONS

JESSE NEAL

1

What do you suppose your former commanding officers would say about that haircut of yours?

In my mind, they should be happy with what I've become. They're all still in the Navy, so they probably wouldn't like it much because it's not exactly up to regulation and they have their military haircuts. I like to think of it as my own little military haircut.

2

What is Jesse Neal's favorite pick-up line?

It may not be the biggest, but it's pretty.

3

Who was the last wrestler you asked for an autograph?

Kizarney, a.k.a. Sinn Bodhi. That was about two years ago. We had our picture taken together and I asked him to sign it. Memories.

4

What was the best Christmas present you received as a kid?

A *Fraggle Rock* drum set. I was five years old. That was my prized possession. I was like the little drummer boy. I have pictures.

5

What's your dream match?

I've already wrestled Brother Ray, and he was always the man. I guess it would have to be a singles match against Kurt Angle.

6

Complete the following sentence: If Jesse Neal weren't wrestling, he would be ...

Lost somewhere on some beautiful beach. I've been spending a lot of time on the beach lately and I've decided I really, really like the beach.

7

You get selected to appear on America's Got Talent. What's your act?

I know I can't dance. I don't know. Sensibility? Does the ability to make sensible decisions count as a talent? I don't know how I'd perform that, though. I guess I would just show up and do something on the fly.

8

Name one song that always gets you psyched up?

"Reconnect" by Destrophy.

9

Who would you cast to play you in Jesse Neal: The Movie?

That's really cool you ask that, because they actually might be doing a movie about my life. It's in talks right now. I guess I'd want Russell Crowe to play me. He's a badass actor. But I might have to play myself in all the scenes with the Mohawk and tattoos; I don't think that look would work for him.

10

What comic book hero do you feel is overdue for movie treatment?

He-Man. He's my favorite.

11

If you could have one super power, what would it be?

Well, I'm already invincible. I guess super strength. I could eat spinach like Popeye or hold up a sword like He-Man. By the power of Greyskull!

12

Can you tell us one thing about Brother Ray that would surprise us?

This is probably going to get me shot, but he's actually a nice guy.



THE WRESTLING OBSERVER HALL OF FAME

THE CLASS OF 2010

In each issue, *PWI* will honor one member of the *Wrestling Observer* Hall of Fame, which we recognize as the sport's official Hall of Fame

A CRUISERWEIGHT WHO shattered size barriers and redefined aerial artistry, a wrestler who claims to be the best in the world at what he does, and a Polish powerhouse comprise 2010 inductees into the *Wrestling Observer* Hall of Fame.

The Class of 2010 is unique as two *active* wrestlers—Rey Mysterio Jr. and Chris Jericho—were the only candidates receiving enough votes for induction. Wladek Zbyszko was inducted as a key historical figure.

"Dr. Death" Steve Williams missed the cutoff by just one vote, while The Assassins, Dr. Wagner Sr., and The Rock 'n' Roll Express also received significant support,

but did not receive enough votes for induction.

Candidates for Hall of Fame induction are voted upon by a panel of wrestling insiders, including past and present wrestlers, writers, and historians. Voters are asked to evaluate candidates' in-ring ability and/or drawing power, longevity, and their overall impact on wrestling. Wrestlers must be at least 35 years old or entering their 15th year in the sport.

For induction, candidates must receive at least 60 percent of the votes in their home region, ensuring an informed panel evaluates all candidates, regardless of geographical boundaries.

Mysterio garnered more votes

than any other candidate, receiving 136 votes (75 percent), while Jericho received more than 115 votes (64 percent).

Oscar Gutierrez started his wrestling career in 1989 at the age of 14. He used the ring name El Colibri (The Hummingbird) before taking on the name Rey Mysterio Jr. in honor of his uncle and trainer, Rey Mysterio.

When he started wrestling, Mysterio stood just 5'2" and weighed 115 pounds, making him smaller than some of the competitors in AAA's mini division.

Mysterio compensated for his lack of size by learning to fly, developing into one of the most dynamic aerialists in Mexico. His feud with Psicosis caught the attention of Paul Heyman, who brought Mysterio into ECW in 1995, giving American fans their first exposure to the Mexican sensation.

In 1996, Mysterio left ECW for WCW, where he quickly became the lynchpin of the cruiserweight division and one of the company's most popular stars. In matches against Jericho, Dean Malenko, Ultimo Dragon, and Eddie Guerrero, Mysterio helped popularize a new style of wrestling, marked by fast-paced, athletic matches featuring acrobatic moves, many near-falls, and internationally inspired offensive moves and holds.

Mysterio won the WCW



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Rey Mysterio Jr. has proven that size really has nothing to do with skill and toughness.

cruiserweight title five times, the WCW tag team title three times, and the short-lived cruiserweight tag team title once.

Though Vince McMahon originally was reluctant to sign him due to his size, Mysterio debuted in WWE in 2002. He quickly proved to be one of the company's most popular—and marketable—stars. Mysterio went on to unprecedented success in WWE, winning the World title on two occasions (making him, by far, the smallest world champion in WWE history), as well as winning four tag team titles, three Intercontinental titles, three cruiserweight titles, and the 2006 Royal Rumble.

Christopher Irvine was another wrestler who was told he was too small to succeed. The son of former New York Ranger Ted Irvine, Chris was raised in Winnipeg, Manitoba, and enrolled in the Hart Brothers Wrestling School at the age of 19. He wrestled Lance Storm in his first match, and the two would become traveling partners and a tag team. As Chris Jericho, he toured Western Canada then competed in Mexico's CMLL promotion in 1992.

Jericho bounced between Mexico and Canada for the next two years, then reunited with Storm in Jim Cornette's Smoky Mountain Wrestling. As The Thrillseekers, Storm and Jericho were positioned as the company's top young tag team.

In 1995, Jericho competed in the second Super J Cup tournament in Japan. During that tournament, he faced "Wild Pegasus" Chris Benoit. That match caught the attention of Eric Bischoff, who offered Jericho a contract with WCW.

Jericho had a brief run in ECW (which saw him win the TV title) before debuting in WCW in 1996. Jericho was a successful mid-card performer in WCW, eventually developing a vocal fan following, due to his entertaining promos and mix of athleticism and comedy. He won the WCW cruiser-



Chris Jericho has produced some wrestling's best work of the past decade, on the mike and in-ring.

weight title four times and held the TV title once. Jericho signed with WWE in 1999 and debuted in grand fashion in August 1999. For weeks, his arrival had been foreshadowed by a countdown clock, which hit zero during a promo by The Rock. In his WWE debut, Jericho went promo-to-promo against WWE's biggest star.

In 2001, Jericho won both the WCW (which was then owned by WWE) World title and the WWE World title, making him the first Undisputed World champion. He headlined WrestleMania 18, losing the Undisputed title to Triple-H.

In 2005, Jericho left wrestling to pursue acting and music interests and to spend time with his family. He returned in 2008 after a viral "binary code" had hinted of his impending arrival for months. During his second WWE run he enjoyed some of the greatest moments of his career, including an epic feud with Shawn Michaels, and was widely considered to be WWE's most versatile performer.

In all, Jericho has won five world championships, a record nine Intercontinental championships, and five combined WWE tag team championships. He is

considered one of the best in-ring performers of the past decade and one of wrestling's all-time great promo men.

Wladek Zbyszko, the younger brother of fellow Hall-of-Famer Stanislaus Zbyszko, was one of wrestling's top attractions from 1910-1920, and was recognized as "world champion" in several cities during the era. Born in Krakow, Poland, in 1891, he was an accomplished weightlifter and catch-as-catch-can style wrestler before making his pro wrestling debut.

Billed as Europe's greatest catch-as-catch-can grappler, Zbyszko became arch-rivals with Ed "Strangler" Lewis. Zbyszko wrestled to a 220-minute draw against recognized champion

Alex Aberg in 1915, then lost to Aberg in a rematch that headlined Madison Square Garden later that year. In June 1917, Zbyszko beat Lewis in a controversial bout in San Francisco to win a version of the world title. Lewis would regain that title a month later, beating Zbyszko in front of 15,000 fans in a match held in a baseball stadium in Boston.

Zbyszko reclaimed his world title with a win over Lewis in December 1917 and defended it throughout the U.S. After a brief stint in the military during World War I, Zbyszko continued to be a major draw during the 1920s. He went on to promote and wrestle in Argentina, becoming one of that nation's biggest stars and holding

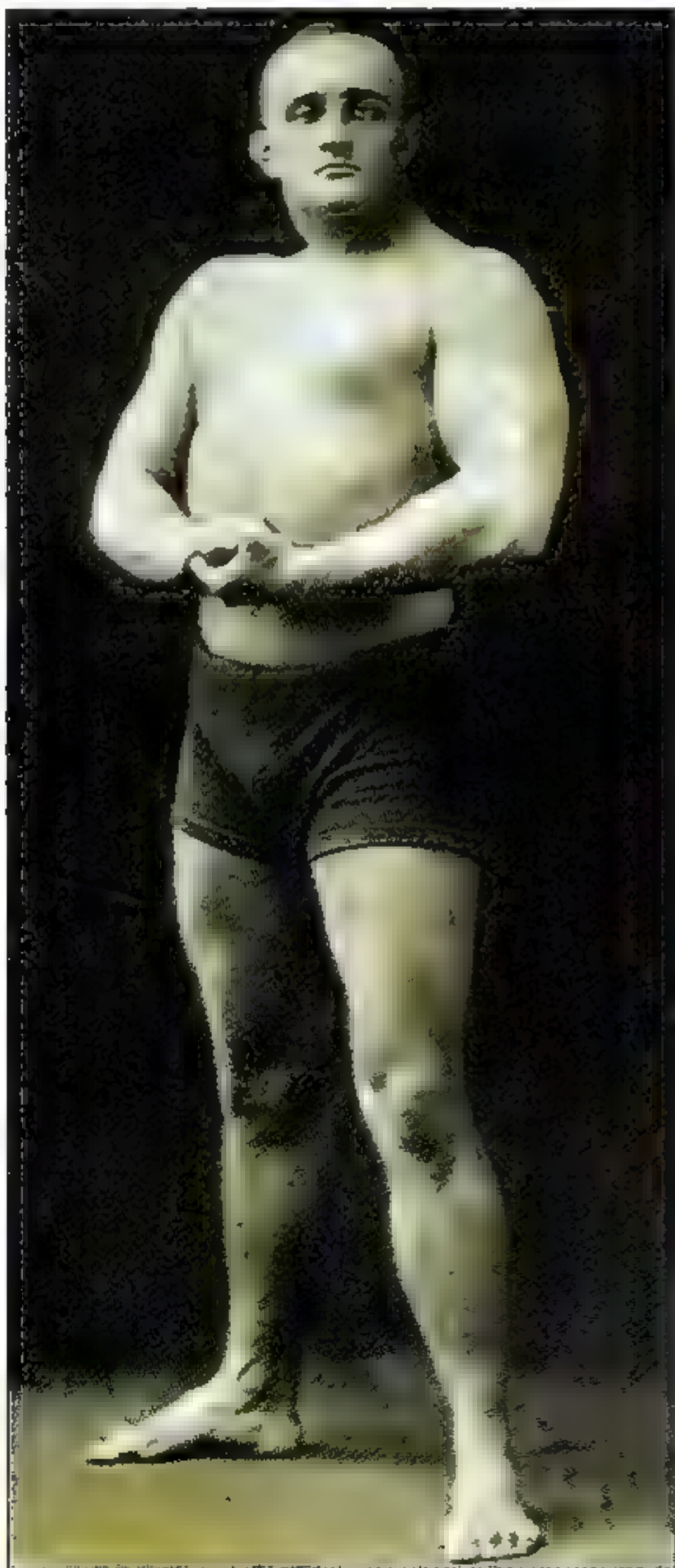
its version of the world title. He fought jiu-jitsu master Helio Gracie to a draw in 1934 and beat boxer Erminio Spalla in a boxer-vs.-wrestler match in 1935.

Zbyszko wrestled his final match in 1950. He died in 1968 at the age of 75.

Cowboy Bob Ellis, Yukon Eric, Bearcat Wright, Cibernetico, Dr. Wagner Jr., and Giant Haystacks received less than 10 percent from their respective regions and will be dropped from next year's ballot.

Spiros Arion, Batista, and Ray Gunkel will be added to next year's ballot.

Former PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED Senior Editor Bill Apter received 59 votes (33 percent) in his first year on the ballot.



Wladek Zbyszko, the brother of fellow Hall-of-Famer Stanislaus Zbyszko, had some epic battles against Ed "Strangler" Lewis in the early part of the 20th century. He was a historical selection by *Observer* Editor Dave Meltzer.

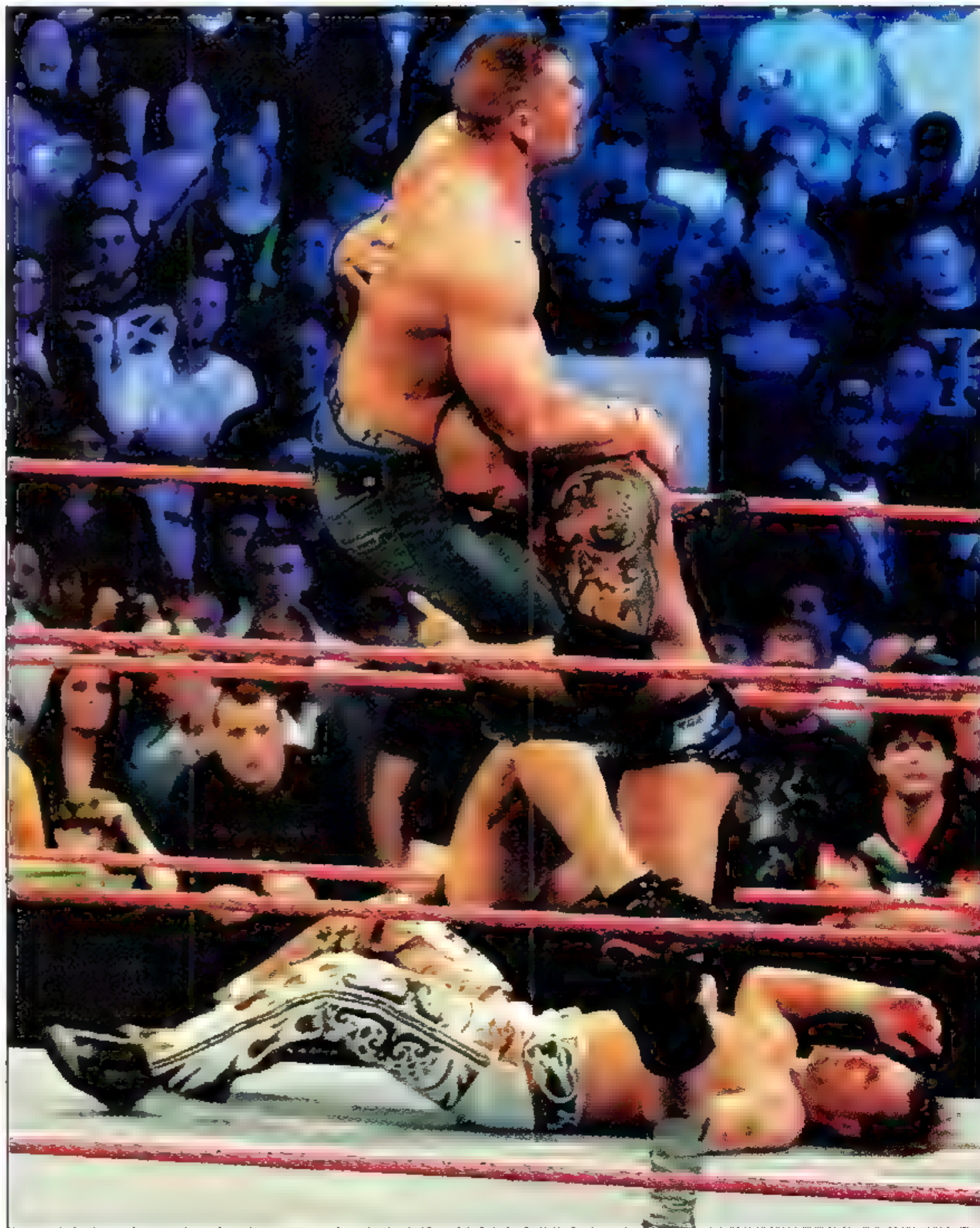


Photo by George Napolitano

Though Batista got a relatively late start in the wrestling business, he was still a six-time world champion. That was good enough to get him on the ballot for next year, but will it be enough to get him into the Hall of Fame?

The Wrestling Observer Hall of Fame

1996 INDUCTEES

Abdullah the Butcher
Perro Aguayo
Andre the Giant
Bert Assirati
Shohei "Giant" Baba
Jim Barnett
"Wild" Red Berry
Fred Blassie
Blue Demon
Nick Bockwinkel
Paul Boesch
Bobo Brazil
Jack Brisco
Bruiser Brody
Mildred Burke
El Canek
Negro Casas
Riki Choshu
Jim Cornette
The Crusher
Alfonso Dantes
The Destroyer
Ted DiBiase
Dick the Bruiser
Dusek Family
Dynamite Kid
Fabulous Kangaroos
Jackie Fargo
Ric Flair
Tatsumi Fujinami
Dory Funk Jr.
Dory Funk Sr.
Terry Funk
Verne Gagne
Cavernario Galindo
Ed Don George
Gorgeous George
Frank Gotch
Karl Gotch

Superstar Graham
Eddie Graham
Rene Guajardo
Gory Guerrero
George Hackenschmidt
Stan Hansen
Bret Hart
Stu Hart
Bobby Heenan
Danny Hodge
Hulk Hogan
Antonio Inoki
Rayo de Jalisco Sr.
Tom Jenkins
Don Leo Jonathan
Gene Kiniski
Fred Kohler
Killer Kowalski
Ernie Ladd
Dick Lane
Jerry Lawler
Ed "Strangler" Lewis
Jim Londos
Salvador Lutteroth
Akira Maeda
Devil Masami
Mil Mascaras
Dump Matsumoto
Earl McCready
Leroy McGuirk
Vince McMahon Jr.
Vince McMahon Sr.
Danny McShane
Rey Mendoza
Mitsuharu Misawa
Joe "Toots" Mondt
Sam Muchnick
Bronko Nagurski
Pat O'Connor
Kintaro Oki

Atsushi Onita
Pat Patterson
Antonio Pena
John Pesek
Roddy Piper
Harley Race
Dusty Rhodes
Rikidozan
Road Warriors
Yvon Robert
Billy Robinson
Antonino Rocca
Buddy Rogers
Lance Russell
Bruno Sammartino
El Santo
Jackie Sato
Randy Savage
Billy Shadow
The Sheik
Hisashi Shinma
Dara Singh
Gordon Solie
El Solitario
Rick Steamboat
Joe Stecher
Tony Stecher
Ray Steele
Ray Stevens
Nobuhiko Takada
Genichiro Tenryu
Lou Thesz
Tiger Mask
(Satoru Sayama)
Jumbo Tsuruta
Frank Tunney
Mad Dog Vachon
Big Van Vader
Johnny Valentine
Fritz Von Erich

Whipper Billy Watson
Bill Watts
Jaguar Yokota
Stanislaus Zbyszko
1997 INDUCTEES
Edouard Carpentier
Toshiaki Kawada
Jimmy Lennon
William Muldoon
Chigusa Nagayo
1998 INDUCTEE
Dos Caras
1999 INDUCTEES
Lioness Asuka
Jushin Liger
Keiji Muto
Jim Ross
2000 INDUCTEES
Steve Austin
Mick Foley
Shinya Hashimoto
Akira Hokuto
Bill Longson
Frank Sexton
Sandor Szabo
2001 INDUCTEES
Black Shadow
Diablo Velasco
Lizmark
Bull Nakano
El Satanico
2002 INDUCTEES
Martin "Farmer" Burns
Jack Curley
Kenta Kobashi
Wahoo McDaniel
Manami Toyota
2003 INDUCTEES
Chris Benoit
Earl Caddock

Francisco Flores
Shawn Michaels
2004 INDUCTEES
Kazushi Sakuraba
The Undertaker
Bob Backlund
Masahiro Chono
Ultimo Dragon
Kurt Angle
Carlos "Tarzan" Lopez
2005 INDUCTEES
The Freebirds
Triple-H
Paul Heyman
2006 INDUCTEES
Eddie Guerrero
Hiroshi Hase
Masakatsu Funaki
Aja Kong
Paul Bowser
2007 INDUCTEES
The Rock
Evan "Strangler" Lewis
Tom Packs
2008 INDUCTEES
Francisco "Paco" Alonso
Martin Karadagian
2009 INDUCTEES
Bill Miller
Midnight Express
Konnar
Masa Saito
Roy Shire
2010 INDUCTEES
Rey Mysterio Jr.
Chris Jericho
Wladek Zbyszko

2010 Hall of Fame Balloting Results

NAME	VOTES	NAME	VOTES	NAME	VOTES
Rey Mysterio Jr.	136	Gorilla Monsoon	64	Dos Caras	18
Chris Jericho	115	Karlöff Lagarde	26	Seiji Sakaguchi	26
Steve Williams	68	Carlos Colon	62	Kiyoshi Tamura	26
The Assassins	76	Wilbur Snyder	44	Von Brauners/Saul Weidenborn	30
Dr. Wagner Sr.	47	Bill Apter	59	Sgt. Slaughter	40
Rock 'n' Roll Express	97	Blue Panther	25	Volk Han	25
Hans Schmidt	70	Jackie Pallo	20	Pedro Morales	38
Lou Albano	95	Rollerball Mark Rocca	20	Sting	37
Mich. McManus	32	E. A. Park	23	Mr. Wrestling II	36
Kinji Shibuya	67	Villano III	23	Owen Hart	35
Jesse Ventura	89	Johnny Saint	19	Curt Hennig	35
Gary Hart	86	Gene & Ole Anderson	53	Edge	32
Henri DeGlane	29	Jimmy Snuka	52	Enrique Torres	23
Red Bastien	59	George Gordienko	33	Horst Hoffman	11
Fabulous Moolah	80	Vampire	20	Jim Crockett Jr.	29
Kent Walton	28	Big Daddy	17	Huracan Ramirez	11
Dick Murdoch	77	Perro Aguayo Jr.	19	Sabu	20
Dr. Alfonso Morales	32	Kendo Nagasaki	16	Gran Hamada	12
Don Owen	74				
Kensuke Sasaki	47				
John Tolos	52				
Ivan Koloff	70				
Atlantis	29				
Jerry Jarrett	68				
Mr. Wrestling	47				

INDEPENDENT ROUND UP

By AL ALVEN

Photo by Scott Finkelstein



When it comes to fighting off the Bruderschaft des Kreuzes, CHIKARA loyalist Eddie Kingston has done his part by defeating various BDK members in recent weeks. Now he needs more fellow CHIKARA originals to do the same.

IT APPEARS THE tide is finally turning in the war between the CHIKARA Pro Originals and the **Bruderschaft des Kreuzes** faction. After being dominated by the invading BDK for months, CHIKARA scored a huge win when **Eddie Kingston** emerged victorious in the annual *Torneo Cibernetico* 16-man tag match. Adding to that accomplishment, Kingston took the massive **Tursas** off of his feet for the first time before pinning him.

"What Eddie Kingston did was shatter the mystique of the BDK and **Tursas**," crowed **UltraMantis Black**, for years one of the promotion's top villains, who put differences with the likes of Kingston, **Mike Quackenbush**, and **Jigsaw** aside to do battle with the outsiders. "The landscape has changed. Now, the rules are different and it is time for us to take back what is ours!"

In addition to Kingston, Quackenbush, Jigsaw, and UltraMantis Black, the CHIKARA contingent consisted of **Stigma**, **Hallowicked**, **Icarus**, and **Vokoder** (who unmasked to reveal himself as the returning **Larry Sweeney**).

The BDK team was made up of the 6'7", 375-pound **Tursas**, **Claudio Castagnoli**, **Ares**, **Pinkie "Pink Ant" Sanchez**, **Sara del Rey**, **Daizee Haze**, **Tim Donst**, and **Delirious**.

It is clear, however, that the BDK is not nearly out of ammunition. While Kingston scored a singles victory over Donst the following night, Castagnoli and Ares rebounded to successfully defend their tag team title against **Ophidian** and **Amasis**, and the team



Photo by George Napolitano

Arrogance oozes out of Steve Corino's pores as he makes his way to the ring. Colt Cabana has vowed to beat the haughtiness out of Corino and chase him from Ring of Honor altogether.

of Tursas and Sanchez took out Quackenbush and Jigsaw.

Colt Cabana has vowed not just to humiliate **Steve Corino**, but to drive the "King Of Old School" out of Ring of Honor. The two men went at it in a brutal "I-Quit" match in Chicago Ridge, Illinois, with the finish bringing to mind the conclusion of the infamous NWA TV title cage match where **Magnum T.A.** forced **Tully Blanchard** to give up by jabbing a splintered piece of wooden chair into his eye.

At one point, **Kevin Steen**—Corino's associate who had been wrapped in a straightjacket to prevent him from interfering—got free and tried to help Corino escape to the back. That's when the locker room emptied, forcing Corino back into the ring. Cabana would eventually force Corino to squeal "I quit" by digging a piece of broken table into his forehead.

The match that followed couldn't have been more different in tone, with **Davey Richards** defeat-

ing "**Fallen Angel**" **Christopher Daniels** in a hard-hitting technical classic that went nearly 30 minutes. After Daniels submitted to Richards' anklelock, the two men shook hands and agreed to have another match down the line.

The win was a big one for Richards, who remains in hot pursuit of ROH champion **Roderick Strong**.

There may be a new most-hated man in Combat Zone Wrestling. Now going by the name of **Robert "The Ego" Anthony**, the former **Egotistico Fantastico** ripped off his mask and ran down a rabid crowd at The Arena in South Philadelphia. Anthony then challenged reigning CZW champion **Jon Moxley** to a match, but bailed as soon as Moxley appeared.

Later that night, Moxley defeated Anthony, but both men left the ring when **Nick Gage** came out of the crowd to a huge reaction. A four-time former CZW champ, Gage is clearly targeting Moxley, but he isn't the only one.

"You think I'm going to quit?" Anthony asked rhetorically afterward. "No chance. So, Nick Gage showed up. Big deal. Moxley's title is going to be mine, and I can't wait to rub it in his face, in Gage's face, and in the face of each and every one of these loser CZW fans. They hate me, and I hate them even more. But, 'The Ego' is going to get the last laugh, mark my words."

Halloween came early to fans of East Coast Championship Wrestling in the form of a wild and colorful "Heroes vs. Villains" 10-man tag match on October 16.

The Hurricane blew into Delaware to team with crowd favorites **Shockwave the Robot**, **Courageous Cruz**, and the "**Red, White, & Blue Express**" of **Blue Meanie** and **Kid America**. The quintet defeated the dastardly faction of **Mr. Ooh La La**, **Nicky Benz**, **Cujo the Hellhound**, **Mr. Scott Wright**, and **Jason Leigh**.

Cruz scored the pin on Cujo to earn the win for his team. The



Photo by Matt Stoklosa

Gregory "Hurricane" Helms made a stop in ECWA, where he lent his superhero persona to the 10-man "Heroes And Villains" tag match, helping the heroes vanquish the villains.

match was emblematic of the family-friendly product being produced by ECWA owner **Mike Tartaglia** and matchmaker **Joe Zanolle**, who took over the promotion from **Jim Kettner** in August.

Tartaglia also owns the South Jersey-based Tri-State Wrestling Alliance, which recently celebrated its one-year anniversary since being revived.

Down in Tennessee, **Chris Richards** appears to be hitting his stride as the Championship Wrestling Alliance's top dog. Richards, who unseated **Robbie Cassidy** for the CWA title back in June, picked

up arguably his biggest win of his reign, against **Alyx Winters**. However, it did not come without some controversy. The ending of the bout, contested inside a steel cage, saw **Rob Knight** slam the cage violently onto Winters' head, leading to an easy pin for Richards. Afterward, Winters promised to get even with both men, and eventually take the title.

Winters retains a stranglehold on the CWA National title, which he took from **Tony Givens** in June of 2009.

Independent promoters are constantly attempting to come

up with new match concepts and ideas. Some work and, obviously, some do not. The aptly named In Your Face company out of Ballston Spa, New York, recently featured a Hangman's Noose match, with **Guillaume de-Sade** wrapping the noose around the neck of **Vigo** to retain his IYF championship.

Only time will tell whether this concept is revisited or tried out in other promotions.

Young **Hayden Avery** is still irate after losing the Great Canadian Wrestling National title despite not being pinned. His defense of the

championship was originally supposed to take place in a three-way match in Oshawa, Ontario, against **Cody Deaner** and **Tiberious King**. But before the match, **RJ City** was mysteriously added to the bout.

A highly competitive four-way match ensued, with City ultimately pinning King in the ring, while Avery and Deaner brawled on the floor.

"I was never pinned, never defeated, yet I'm now a former champion," said Avery. "RJ City wasn't even in the match originally, but he walks away with the belt. You know, this isn't fair, but I'm going to make things right."

The High Rollers continue to run wild in Hoosier Pro Wrestling, but not for long, if promoter **Jerry Wilson** has anything to say about

it. After the Rollers teamed with **Hillbilly Jed** to defeat **TVZ** and **Donny Idol** in a brawl that went all over the HPW Arena, Wilson got caught up in the action.

The Rollers and manager **April Hunter** were joined by "**Diceman**" **Ronnie Vegas** in an attack that left the helpless promoter a bloody mess. Afterward, Wilson declined to level any fines or suspensions. Rather, he informed the Rollers that he was bringing in **Doug Gilbert** and **Flash Flanagan** to watch his back and put an end to the attacks.

In other news, **Ricky Ruckus** stole the HPW heavyweight title from **Ox Harley** after interference from **Michael Myers**.

Thumbtack Jack, best known for his work stateside with CZW,

severely injured his back in a match against **Masada** in his native Germany on October 2. The following day, he revealed that he had broken both his thoracic vertebrae and sternum, and announced his retirement.

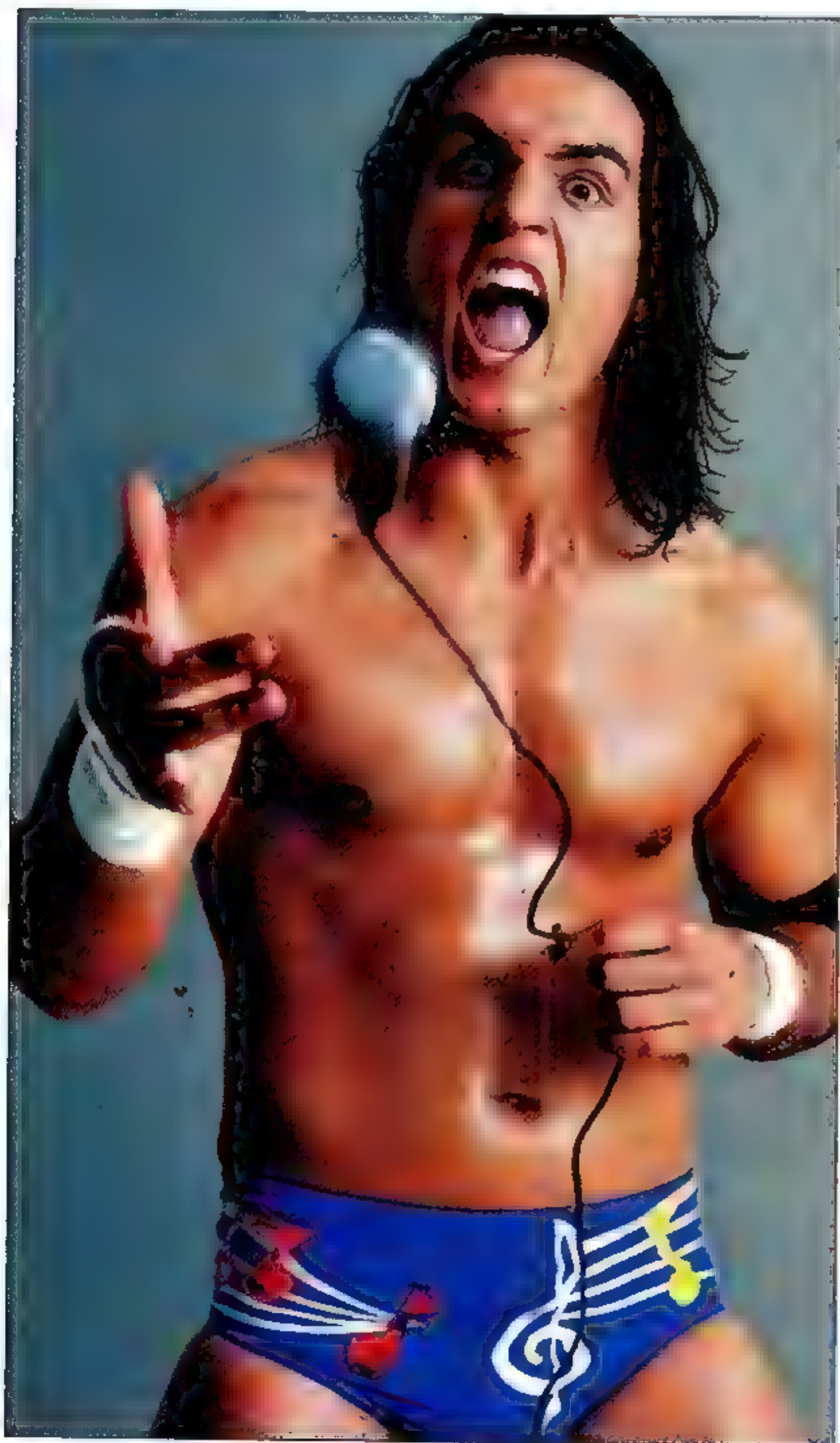
Widely considered to be one of the top death match wrestlers in the world, Jack was a former CZW Ultraviolet Underground champion and the winner of Tournament of Death 8. He will be inducted into the Westside Xtreme wrestling group's hall of fame in December.

Very sad news to report also out of Connecticut-based Defiant Pro Wrestling, as the company's owner/

promoter **Mike Milano** passed away on October 20. Only 46, Milano had been hospitalized after suffering a stroke earlier that week.

Recent Title Changes

Chaotic Wrestling, Lawrence, MA, October 2: **Mikaze** pinned **Brian Milonas** for the Chaotic New England championship ... **Independent Hardcore Wrestling, Red Bud, IL, October 2:** **Sean Vincent** beat IHW heavyweight champion **Brandon Aarons** and **Billy McNeil** in a triple-threat match to win the title ... **Southern Wrestling Alliance, Hattiesburg, MS, October 2:** **Lady Death** beat **Brittany Bass** for the SWA Women's title ... **Johnny Blade** beat Southern Regional champion **Steve Sawyer** for the title ... **Blade Trinity & Billy Wayne** beat **Frankie Thomas & DDG** for the tag team title ... **High Voltage** defeated **Turbo Ted** for the heavyweight title ... **Xtreme Outlaw Wrestling, Brookhaven, MS, October 2:** **Anton Leveligh** pinned All Pro champion **Mitch Toretto** for the title ... **Black Diamond Wrestling, Moundsville, WV, October 3:** **The Bouncer & Rock Lobster** defeated **Vinnie Stone & Edrick Everhart** for the BDW tag team title ... **Moonshine Branded Wrestling, Welland, ON, October 3:** **Scotty O'Shea** beat **Rip Impact** and **Zack Storm** in a three-way elimination match to win the vacant MBW heavyweight title ... **New Era Wrestling, Shelbyville, IN, October 9:** "**Sexy**" **Shawn Cook** beat **Damian Cole** to win the NEW title ... **Pro Wrestling Guerrilla, Reseda, CA, October 9:** **Claudio Castagnoli** defeated **Joey Ryan**, **Chris Hero**, and **Brandon Gatson** in a four-way to claim the vacant PWG heavyweight title ... **Tulalip Championship Wrestling, Marysville, WA, October 16:** **Christopher Ryssek & Johnny Obsession** beat **Aaron Bolo & Azul Angel** to win the TCW tag title ... **Lylah Lodge** defeated **Malia Hosaka** to win the TCW Women's championship. □



Just how RJ City (pictured) was in a position to wrestle for the Great Canadian National title—let alone win it!—is still something that baffles deposed champion Hayden Avery.

THE INTERNATIONAL REPORT

COMPILED BY BILL MELTZER

IT IS RATHER UNUSUAL in Japan for active wrestlers to go public with disagreements they might have with their current company. But outspoken **Satoshi Kojima** made no bones about the fact that he had disagreements with management shortly after winning the IWGP heavyweight championship.

New Japan wanted to name rising star **Hirooki Goto** the top contender for the title. Kojima, however, was adamant about facing former IWGP champ **Shinsuke Nakamura**, despite the fact that Goto had recently defeated Nakamura cleanly on a major card for the right to challenge Kojima for the title. Declaring CHAOS leader Nakamura the stronger opponent and better

drawing card, the champion publicly complained about the company attempting to ignore his input.

Eventually, New Japan and Kojima had a meeting. Nothing was resolved, however, as neither New Japan President **Naoki Sugabayashi** nor Kojima would budge from their positions. As of press time, the situation remained at a stalemate, with no official word regarding who Kojima's next opponent will be.

The ongoing epidemic of kidnappings and grisly murders in nine of Mexico's 31 states has caused security concerns in both the sporting and entertainment worlds. Recently, a canceled **Jonas Brothers** concert in the beleaguered Mexican city of Monterrey made news in both the U.S. and Mexico because of security concerns.

Top officials in the arch-rival AAA and CMLL promotions have collaborated on strategies for ensuring the safety of their performers and fans in attendance. In the meantime, some of the top stars in Mexico have had their say on the matter. In a recent newspaper interview, AAA heavyweight champion **Dr. Wagner Jr.** spoke out about the need to exercise common sense and not give in to fear.

"There is no need for panic," Wagner said. "But we all have to be alert and smart

about keeping ourselves as safe as possible. We travel in numbers, avoid wandering off to unfamiliar areas, stay out of known trouble spots, and things of that nature. If there isn't adequate arena security available for the performers and the fans, the show shouldn't be held. A wrestling show isn't worth dying over. Otherwise, it's business as usual."

WWE is moving forward with plans for its own Mexican tour in the spring of 2011. A 2010 tour was carried through without incident. Increasing market share in Mexico, both for televised and live events, remains a central goal on WWE's international agenda.

Many Japanese fans hailed the tag team rivalry between **The Golden Lovers** and the team of **Prince Devitt** and **Ryusuke Taguchi** as 2010's Feud of the Year, at the same time calling The Golden Lovers' upset of IWGP junior tag team champs Devitt and Taguchi at Tokyo's Sumo Hall as the Match of the Year. Now the teams are scheduled to meet again, in a much-hyped rematch in Osaka, likely followed by at least one more big-card clash in 2011.

In the meantime, Devitt will be defending his IWGP junior heavyweight championship.

Sometimes in wrestling there is more to be gained from a loss than a win: **Bryan Danielson** (WWE's **Daniel Bryan**) earned widespread praise for his professionalism in handling his departure from Puerto Rico's IWA promotion upon returning to WWE following his controversial forced hiatus/dismissal from WWE. In similar instances where American wrestlers have won titles outside the



Photo by Kaichi Yoshizawa

Despite earning a shot at Satoshi Kojima's IWGP heavyweight title with a win over Shinsuke Nakamura, Kojima has publicly insisted that Nakamura is a better wrestler and draw than Goto, and would rather face him.



As "violent" as he could be, nobody could ever say Bryan Danielson lacks class. Bryan honored his commitment to IWA by wrestling one final match (a championship title loss to Savio Vega), despite having been recalled by WWE.

continental U.S. and later signed a new contract with one of the major promotions, they have simply vacated the titles rather than returning to defend (and usually lose) the belts, unless there is a big payday involved. Upon being recalled to WWE, Bryan took the honorable path by fulfilling his obligations to IWA. In a single night, he lost his IWA Puerto Rican championship to **Dennis Rivera** and also dropped a match to IWA promoter and veteran star **Savio Vega**.

The lucha libre community is mourning the recent deaths of **Jose Nieves** at age 75 and **La Fiera** at age 49. Nieves enjoyed a long and prosperous career in the ring and

an even more successful career as a trainer. La Fiera was a star of the 1980s who subsequently fell from grace, both in and out of the ring.

Born **Pedro Mendoza** in Mexico City, Nieves wrestled his first match in 1952 and his last in 1997. Primarily a mid-card singles wrestler and tag team performer, he competed under an assortment of ring names, but made his most lasting impression as Jose Nieves in the 1960s and 1970s. Although he did not enjoy a stellar win-loss record in the ring, he served a valuable behind-the-scenes role as a talent evaluator.

Nieves was a prolific trainer of aspiring wrestlers, preparing

dozens of future pros that went on to lengthy careers in the wrestling business. Among his most successful students were **Los Villanos** (consisting of **Villano I**, **II**, and **III**), **El Halcon**, **Talisman**, **Popitekus**, **El Hijo del Gladiador**, **Pequeno**, and **Irma Aguilar**.

Born **Arturo Casco-Hernandez**, La Fiera ("The Fierce One") was the son of famed luchador **Hercules Poblano** and brother of **Angel Poblano**. Trained by his father and **Diablo Velasco**, he launched his career in April 1977 in Mexico. By the early-1980s, he gained a reputation as one of the best technical wrestlers in the world, and was a major star both in his homeland and Japan. When **Mitsuharu Misawa** made his 1984 debut as **Tiger Mask** in the All-Japan promotion, he chose Casco to be his opponent. Returning to Mexico, La Fiera staged a memorable feud with **Gran Hamada** and captured the NWA middleweight championship from his rival. Casco also opposed **Eddie Guerrero** in one of Guerrero's first feuds, defeating the future superstar in a hair-vs.-mask match.

Unfortunately, La Fiera's star fell by the 1990s due to mounting personal problems and assorted injuries. As his life spiraled downward due to drug addiction, his behavior became increasingly erratic and he gained a reputation among promoters for unreliability. His career stalled when he was arrested and convicted on drug dealing charges. However, he had a short-lived revival in 1996 when he teamed with fan favorites **Dos Caras** and **Hector Garza** to win the CMLL Trios championship from **Bestia Salvaje**, **Emilio Charles Jr.**, and **Sangre Chicana**.

Semi-retired since the early-2000s, La Fiera wrestled periodically over the past decade. Unfortunately, he never exorcized his personal demons. His death at age 49 came as the result of being stabbed five times. He died the following day. An investigation was ongoing at press time.

ARENA REPORTS

We encourage promoters and readers to e-mail results to:

PWIResults@yahoo.com

Please try to utilize the exact format you see in the Arena Reports. Also, please distinguish between handicap matches and three- or four-way matches. And, when reporting the result of a handicap match, indicate the number of competitors and who was the last man eliminated. Finally, please note pinfall finishes. Following these guidelines will help us greatly and make it more likely that your report will be used.

SPOTLIGHT CARD OF THE MONTH

FLORIDA

DAYTONA BEACH—WWE SmackDown! at the Ocean Center: World tag team champions The Motor City Machine Guns (Chris Sabin & Alex Shelley) defeated Generation Me (Max & Jeremy Buck). Tara Lee, Kaitlyn's champion, Angelina Love, Velvet Sky and Madison Rayne will face each other for the title. Ink Inc. (Jesse Neal & Shannon Moore) beat Eric Young & Orlando Jordan. A double elimination tag team match: Douglas Williams & Rob Van Dam pinned Abyss & Kane. In a tag team match, Kevin Nash, D'Angelo Dinero & Sting beat Samoa Joe & Jeff Jarrett. In a handicap match, Tommy Dreamer, Rhino, Sabu, Stevie Richards & Raven defeated AJ Styles, James Storm, Robert Roode, Matt Morgan & Kazarian. In a ladder match, Jeff Hardy defeated Mr. Anderson. In a three-way match, Kurt Angle beat Matt Hardy & Jeff Hardy.

Spotlight Photos by Lee Boutin
TNA Wrestling

UNITED STATES

ARKANSAS

HARRISON—Mid-States Wrestling at the Fairgrounds Indoor Expo Building: Jim Fallon & Doomsday defeated The Canadian Red Devil & Phil Lawrence ... Jake Boulder defeated Lars Manderson ... Stephen E. defeated Independent Wrestling International champion Gary Gram in a non-title match ... Dustin Heritage defeated Jason Jones ... Jamie Lynn defeated Cobra Kai ... Southern tag team champions The Ridge Runners (Bubba Hall & Adrian Steel) defeated Tony Raze & Ryan Kelly ... El Matador Uno defeated heavyweight champion Michael Barry in a non-title match (10-16-10)

—Kel Varnson

CALIFORNIA

HAYWARD—APW at The Garage: Malachi pinned El Chupacabra ... Jeckles the Jester pinned Steve Stamp ... Rik Luxury pinned Dana Lee ... Adam Thornstowe & Luster the Legend defeated Alexis Dravko & Sheik Khan Abadi ... Dylan Drake defeated Dave Dutra by submission ... Jeckles the Jester & Dana Lee defeated Larry Blackwell & Corvus by DQ ... Jody

Kristofferson pinned Will Rood ... Matt Carlos pinned Mr. Wrestling #4. (10-16-10)

—Roger Dudley

OCEANSIDE—So-Cal Pro Wrestling at the Boys & Girls Club: Angel Santos pinned Kid Caramba ... Nick Lovin & Ric Ellis defeated Todd Chandler & Matt Twizted ... Chimaera, SoCal Crazy, & B-Boy defeated Shane & Shannon Ballard & Johnny Paradise ... Heavyweight champion Hector Canales pinned Ricky Mandel in a streetfight ... Tommy Wilson won a 21-man rumble match, last eliminating Kid Caramba to become number-one contender to the heavyweight championship. (10-16-10)

—Chad Simpicio

ANAHEIM—Mach-1 Wrestling at the American Sports Center: Mike Rayne pinned Todd Chandler ... Mikey Callahan pinned Ruben Iglesias ... James Morgan & Nick Madrid defeated Leo Blaze & Cedric the Hitman ... Shawn Rickers pinned T.J. Perkins ... Joey Ryan & Scorpio Sky defeated Peter Avalon & Brandon Parker ... Heavyweight champion Willie Mack pinned Brian Cage. (10-15-10)

—Chad Simpicio

STOCKTON—WWE Raw at the Stockton Arena: Goldust beat Ted DiBiase Jr. ... FCW champion Mason Ryan defeated Zack Ryder ... Ezekiel Jackson beat William Regal ... Nexus (Heath Slater & David Ortunga) beat Santino Marella &



The double-team tactics of TNA World tag team champions The Motor City Machine Guns worked to perfection against Generation Me. Alex Shelley and Chris Sabin have established themselves as one of the premier tag teams of this generation.

Vladimir Kozlov ... U.S. champion Daniel Bryan pinned John Morrison ... Wade Barrett beat Mark Henry ... Eve Torres & Melina defeated Maryse & Alicia Fox ... C.M. Punk pinned R-Truth ... WWE champion Randy Orton beat Sheamus in a steel cage match.
(10-09-10)

—Mike Durand

RESEDA—Pro Wrestling Guerrilla at American Legion Post #308: Brian Cage pinned Johnny Yuma ... Candice LeRae pinned Peter Avalon ... Rocky Romero pinned Ryan Taylor ... Jay & Mark Briscoe defeated Dustin & Brandon Cutler ... Chuck Taylor pinned Johnny Goodtime ... Ricochet pinned El Generico ... Claudio Castagnoli defeated Joey Ryan, Chris Hero, and Brandon Gatson in a four-way for the vacant heavyweight championship.
(10-09-10)

—Chad Simpicio

ANAHEIM—Mach-1 Wrestling at the American Sports Center: Shawn Rickers pinned Johnny Yuma ... Joey Ryan pinned Jaysin Strife ... Peter Avalon & Brandon Parker defeated Nick Madrid & James Morgan ... T.J. Perkins defeated Brian Cage by DQ ... Jason Watts pinned Ryan Taylor.
(10-08-10)

—Chad Simpicio

ANAHEIM—WWE Raw at the Honda Center: Goldust beat Ted DiBiase Jr. ... FCW champion Mason Ryan defeated Zack Ryder ... Ezekiel Jackson beat William Regal ... Nexus (Heath Slater & David Ortunga) beat Santino Marella & Vladimir Kozlov ... U.S. champion Daniel Bryan pinned John Morrison ... Wade Barrett beat Mark Henry ... Eve Torres & Melina defeated Maryse & Alicia Fox ... C.M. Punk pinned R-Truth ... WWE champion Randy Orton beat Sheamus in a steel cage match.
(10-08-10)

—Chad Simpicio

SIMI VALLEY—Millennium Pro Wrestling at the Yankee Doodles Nightclub: Jarek Matthews defeated Billy Blade by DQ ... Women's champion Nikki pinned Amanda ... Brandon Parker pinned Chris Kadilak ... Hellkid pinned Fern Owen ... Maximum champion Lethal Logan X defeated Whiskey Fists Macintosh by submission ... Tool vs. Bo Cooper ended in a double-countout ... Spectre & Mario Banks defeated Los Nerds (Fan Boy & Amazing Ray) ... Tag Team Tournament Semifinals: Anchors Away (David E. Jones & Ryan Stone) defeated Under Pressure & Omar Duncan ... The Ballard Brothers (Shane & Shannon) defeated Rising Son & Disco Machine.
(10-02-10)

—Chad Simpicio

COLORADO

DENVER—WWE at the Pepsi Center: R-Truth pinned Justin Gabriel ... Alberto Del Rio beat Finlay ... Edge pinned Jack Swagger ... Sheamus defeated John Morrison ... WWE champion Randy Orton pinned Wade Barrett.
(10-16-10)

—Bart Knowler



Special referee Mickie James asks Tara if she would like to submit to Velvet Sky's submission lock. Tara toughs it out, escapes the hold, and wins the Knockouts title when James misses the fact that Tara's pinfall on Sky is aided by a handful of tights.

CONNECTICUT

WATERBURY—Northeast Wrestling at the Crosby High School Gym: Cedric Alexander beat Jake Manning ... Joey Bricco vs. Eddy Latham ended in a no-contest ... Ryan McBride & Vin the Chin beat Chris Battle & Caleb Konley ... Carlito defeated Robbie E. ... Ron Zombie pinned Tommy Dreamer in a hardcore match ... Matt Taven & Officer Mike Tripp defeated Brian Anthony & Bull Dredd (managed by Kurt Adonis) ... Mickie James beat Mia Yim ... Daniel Bryan defeated Shelton Benjamin.
(10-01-10)

—Tim Walker

DELAWARE

NEWARK—East Coast Wrestling Association at the Greater Newark Boys & Girls Club: Chris Wyld defeated Aden Chambers ... Corey Blaze defeated J.J. Crew Guy & Revolution by DQ ... Travis Blake & Gus Grand defeated Cono Capuccia ... T.J. Cannon & Bruce Maxwell defeated tag team champions Matt Logan & Chase Del for the title ... MEGA vs. Glen Osbourne ended in a double-DQ ... Heavyweight champion Andrew Ryker defeated Bazooka Joe ... Shane Helms, The Blue Meanie, Kid America, Shockwave the Robot, & Courageous Cruz defeated Mr. Ooh La La, Nicky Benz, CUJO the Hellhound, Mr. Scott Wright, & Jason Leigh.
(10-10-10)

—Joe Zanolle

FLORIDA

TAMPA—FCW at the FCW Arena: Bobby Dutch, Conrad Tanner, Titus O'Neill, & James Bronson defeated Ron Myers, Kenny Li, Cable Jones, & Buck Dixon ... Marcus Owens pinned Devin Allen ... Roman Leake pinned Fahd Rakman ... Divas champion Naomi pinned Kaitlyn ... Epico, Hunico, & Donny Marlow defeated Jackson Andrews, Jinder Mahal, & Brodus Clay ...

Richie Steamboat pinned Jacob Nova ... Seth Rollins pinned Brad Maddox ... Wes Brisco & Xavier Woods defeated Damien Sandow & Calvin Raines ... Abraham Washington & Bo Rotundo defeated tag team champions Johnny Curtis & Derrick Bateman, and Byron Saxton & Mason Ryan in a three-way non-title match.
(10-21-10)

—Duane Long

SANFORD—Vintage Wrestling at the Vintage Coliseum: Sam Shaw defeated Q.T. Marshall ... Mister Saint Laurant defeated Wayne Van Dyke ... Tag team champions The European Union (Neil Faith & Adam Windsor) beat The Dark City Fight Club (Jon Davis & Kory Chavis) by DQ ... Bruce Santee defeated Steve Goins ... Mike Cruz beat Shooter Storm ... Heavyweight champion Jesse Neal defeated Eric Cooper ... Aaron Epic won the 30-man Florida Rumble last eliminating Sam Shaw.
(10-16-10)

—Billy Wood

ORLANDO—TNA Impact at the Impact Zone: Robbie E pinned Amazing Red ... TV champion AJ Styles pinned D'Angelo Dinero ... Beer Money Inc. (James Storm & Robert Roode) beat Sabu & Rob Van Dam ... Mickie James pinned Sarita ... Kazarian beat Mr. Anderson in an Ultimate X match.
(10-21-10)

—Duane Long

ORLANDO—TNA Impact at the Impact Zone: Madison Rayne pinned Knockouts champion Tara for the title ... Samoa Joe beat Abyss by DQ ... Beer Money Inc. (James Storm & Robert Roode), AJ Styles, Douglas Williams, & Kazarian beat D'Angelo Dinero in a handicap match ... Rob Van Dam vs. Mr. Anderson ended in a no-contest.
(10-14-10)

—Duane Long

ORLANDO—TNA Impact at the Impact Zone: Angelina Love & Velvet Sky beat Madison Rayne & Tara ... Mick Foley beat Ric Flair in a last-man-standing match ... Ink Inc. (Jesse Neal & Shannon Moore) beat Orlando Jordan & Eric Young by forfeit ... Kurt Angle won a 19-man battle royal.
(10-07-10)

—Duane Long

OVIDO—Wrestling for a Cause at Hagerly High School: The Saint defeated Francisco Ciatso ... Christopher Gray beat Raymond Snow ... Phil Davis beat Michael Patrick ... Chris Harris beat Vito DeNucci ... Buck Quartermaine defeated Chris Nelson ... Sean Davis beat Moose Madison ... Big Vito defeated Kahagas.
(10-01-10)

—Richard Merritt

GEORGIA

EASTANOLLEE—Southern Wrestling Association at The BoonDocks Arena: Johnny Sonset Clark pinned Ballenger ... Slam Dunk (Stevie Bryant & Venomus) defeated Chris Foster & Krymsin ... The Foreign Xchange (Enigma & El Marko) defeated Slam Dunk ... NStyle (Donn E. & The Josh) defeated The Foreign Xchange ... Bobby Holbrook & Kid Cassanova defeated NStyle ... Bad Stuff (Bad Jack & Hotstuff Adam Mabry) defeated Bobby Holbrook & Kid Cassanova ... Lance Christopher pinned U.S. champion Dale Dwindle to win the title ... Jon Hogan pinned Bush Hog ... Billy Starr & Tommy Sawyer defeated tag team champions Kevin Blue & Nobody in a streetfight for the title ... Panhead Nelson defeated Premier heavyweight champion James Boulevard in a bullrope match for the title.
(10-09-10)

—Dale Cleveland

ATLANTA—Platinum Championship Wrestling at The Masquerade: Najasism defeated Dwight Power by submission ... Mason defeated Scott Steele by submission ... De La Vega, Pandora, Sugar Dunkerton,

Michael Cannon, & The Phantom beat CAMPUS Strike Force ... The Vandal pinned Lee Roy ... The Konkrete Gorillaz (Nemesis & Brian Blaze) defeated The Exotic Ones (Simon Sermon & Rick Michaels) ... Heavyweight champion Shane Marx defeated Davey Richards, Chip Day, and Jay Fury in a four-way.
(10-06-10)

—Stephen Platinum

MARIETTA—RPW at Marietta Middle School: Trik Nasty defeated Dirk Extreme ... T.J. Phillips defeated Jason Kincaid ... Facade defeated ASW X division champion Aaron Draven, Johnny Gargano, and Zac Vincent in a Fatal Four-way to win the title ... Viper & Onyx beat The Murder Junkies in a Viper's Pit match ... Dirty South beat Jason Gory and Cole Cash ... NWA Dawg Pound champion Chance Prophet beat Flash Fury in a Casket match ... Sara Del Rey beat Daffney by submission ... TNA X division champion Jay Lethal defeated Stevie Richards.
(10-02-10)

—Adam Montgomery

ILLINOIS

GLEN CARBON—NWA Dynamo Pro Wrestling/High Voltage Wrestling at the Sports Academy: Makaze pinned Super Castaldi XIII ... K.C. Karrington defeated Tyler Cook ... Dan Walsh beat Billy McNeil, Outkast, and Trent Stone in a four-corner match to win the vacant HVW Livewire title ... The Full Contact Dojo (Jonathan Davis & Ric King) beat HVW tag team champions The Hooligans (Devin & Mason Cutter) for the title ... Alexandre Rudolph pinned Kory Twist ... Jeremy Wyatt defeated HVW heavyweight champion Kahagas for the title ... Kevin X beat NWA Central States champion Mark Sterling by DQ.
(10-16-10)

—Patrick Brandmeyer

HOFFMAN ESTATES—TNA at the Sears Centre: Samoa Joe beat Jeff Jarrett by submission ... X division champion Jay

Lethal pinned Douglas Williams ... Beer Money Inc. (James Storm & Robert Roode) defeated Orlando Jordan & Eric Young ... Matt Morgan pinned Rhino ... Tommy Dreamer beat Abyss in a Monster's Ball match.
(10-15-10)

—Mike Mardsen

ROCKFORD—TNA at the Rockford Metro Centre: Samoa Joe beat Jeff Jarrett ... X division champion Jay Lethal pinned Douglas Williams ... Beer Money Inc. (James Storm & Robert Roode) defeated Orlando Jordan & Eric Young ... Rhino pinned Matt Morgan ... Tommy Dreamer beat Abyss in a Monster's Ball match.
(10-14-10)

—Mike Mardsen

LaSALLE—DREAMWEAVE wrestling at the Knights of Columbus: Waylon Beck defeated Joey Marx, Justice Jones, Scott Keyes, DTM, and Ninja Bill in a six-man scramble match ... Mr. 450 & Samurai Del Sol defeated If Looks Could Kill ... Yabo the Clown beat G.T. Vega ... Colt Cabana pinned Dan Lawrence ... Tag team champions Zero Gravity defeated Juice & Synn Diesel ... Alternative champion Mason Beck beat Steve Boz ... Acid defeated Ace Martino ... Austin Roberts beat Marshe Rocket ... Jades Hades beat heavyweight champion Nick Brubaker in a steel cage match for the title.
(10-09-10)

—J.C. Costilli

RED BUD—Independent Hardcore Wrestling at The V: Shorty Biggs pinned Steven Kennedy ... Poodoo the Cow defeated Dash Rando ... Bob Orton Jr. beat Brandon Graves ... Brandon Espinosa pinned Ace Hawkins ... Chaz Wesson defeated The Great Malaki ... Cameron Cage beat Kurt Styles ... Heritage Wrestling Coalition champion Donovan Riddick pinned Mephisto in a death match ... Illinois champion Eric Allen defeated Jimmy Karryt ... The Great Cheyenne pinned Angela DeBella ... Sean Vincent beat heavyweight champion Brandon Aarons and Billy McNeil in a triple-threat match for the title.
(10-02-10)

—Patrick Brandmeyer

INDIANA

MADISON—Supreme Championship Wrestling at the Gordon Arena: Nic Noble pinned Billy Mattern ... Kid USA pinned Roger Blade ... Big & Tasty beat The Northwest Connection ... Fudd beat Tom Mitchell by DQ ... The Marksmen & Nic Noble defeated Roger Blade, Eric Draven, & Texas Outlaw.
(10-10-10)

—Freddie Peavler

MADISON—Supreme Championship Wrestling at the Gordon Arena: Heavyweight champion Rob Royale defeated Eric Draven by DQ ... Roger Blade beat Kid USA by submission ... The Amazing Pooky pinned Jerric Spade ... Tom Mitchell pinned Rob Royale ... Todd Morton pinned Mid-America champion Kharn Alexander to win the title ... Marksman Fudd pinned Eric Draven in streetfight.
(10-03-10)

—Freddie Peavler



Ink Inc. crotches both Eric Young and Orlando Jordan. Young howls in pain, while Jordan seems to delight in the moment. Hmmm. The incompatibility of Young and Jordan led to their downfall; Shannon Moore pinned Jordan after Orlando was dropkicked and clotheslined by his own partner.



Jay Lethal vaults the top rope and cross-bodyblocks a surprised Douglass Williams. The technical exhibition between X division champion Lethal and former champ Williams delighted the enthusiastic Daytona Beach crowd.

IOWA

DUBUQUE—TNA at the Five Flags Center: Samoa Joe beat Jeff Jarrett by submission ... X division champion Jay Lethal pinned Douglass Williams ... Knockouts champion Madison Rayne beat Angelina Love ... Beer Money Inc. (James Storm & Robert Roode) defeated Orlando Jordan & Eric Young ... Rhino pinned Matt Morgan ... Tommy Dreamer beat Abyss in a Monster's Ball match. (10-16-10)

—Alfonso Alvarez

KANSAS

TOPEKA—WWE Smackdown at the Land-on Arena: Edge pinned Jack Swagger ... Layla defeated Kelly Kelly ... WWE Tag team champions Cody Rhodes & Drew McIntyre defeated Kofi Kingston & Kaval ... Intercontinental champion Dolph Ziggler defeated MVP ... Rey Mysterio Jr. pinned Alberto Del Rio ... World champion Kane defeated The Big Show. (10-08-10)

—Jerry Sakowski

WICHITA—WWE Raw at the Intrust Bank Arena: Mark Henry & Evan Bourne beat John Cena & Michael Tarver ... Natalya beat Alicia Fox by submission ... U.S. champion Daniel Bryan beat Sheamus by DQ ... The Bella Twins defeated Mi-

chelle McCool & Layla ... Wade Barrett won a number-one contender 20-man battle royal. (10-04-10)

—Jerry Sakowski

KENTUCKY

PRINCETON—Western Kentucky Wrestling at the Old High School: Shorty Shortstack defeated Damien ... Ladies champion Misty James beat Jessie Belle by DQ ... Jeff Daniels & Tommy Mercer beat Diamond Steele & Kevin Dunn ... Gator McAlister beat Beau James ... Jerry Lawler beat Tracy Smothers. (10-16-10)

—Jake Booth

MARYLAND

JOPPATOWNE—Maryland Championship Wrestling's at the Joppatowne Flea Market: Tag team champions The Holy Rollers (Earl the Pearl & Rich Myers) defeated Ronnie Zukko in a handicap match ... Rage TV champion Cobian defeated A.J. Sabotage by submission ... Fed Up (G-Fed & C-Fed) beat The Hellcats (Sexy Steve & Jimmy Starz) ... Alexander James beat Matt Wyld ... Hurricane Helms & Nui Tofiga defeated The Harbor City Hit Squad (Kindred & Drolix) ... Mickie James beat Mia Yim and Melissa Coates in a three-way ... Heavyweight champion Ryan McBride beat Teddy Stigma by DQ ... Ryan McBride, Christian York, Cobian, & Carlito beat Teddy Stigma, Tyler Hilton, Earl the Pearl, & Rich Myers. (10-09-10)

—Tim Walker

MASSACHUSETTS

FALL RIVER—Top Rope Promotions at the Police Athletic League: Vinny Marseglia defeated Bob Evans ... Matt Taven defeated Brandon Webb ... Mike Bennett beat Interstate champion Guy Alexander in a non-title match ... Matt Magnum defeated Shane Alden ... Tommaso Ciampa beat P.J. Polaco by forfeit ... Vinny Marseglia defeated Tommaso Ciampa by reverse decision ... Matt Taven beat Matt Magnum ... Matt Taven defeated Vinny Marseglia. (10-08-10)

—Shawn O'Domski

WORCESTER—Powerhouse Wrestling at the White Eagle Association: Tommy Mack defeated Pinkie Sanchez ... Women's champion Ivy defeated Amber O'Neal ... Tony Atlas defeated Josef Von Schmidt by DQ ... Jay Jaillet beat Mark Moment ... Tag Team champions Anthony Michaels & Mark Gore defeated K.C. Blade & E.C. Negro ... Big Business beat Damien Darling ... Jimmy Jact Cash defeated Keanu ... Heavyweight champion Don Vega beat P.J. Polaco in a no-disqualification match. (10-02-10)

—Shawn O'Domski

GLOUCESTER—NWA Fusion at the White Marsh Shopping Center: King of the Mid-Atlantic Silver Bracket, Quarterfinals: Damien Wayne defeated Mr. Midnite by DQ ... Victor Griff beat Dirty Money ... Preston Quinn pinned Krotch ... Ray Storm defeated Brandon Day ... Semifinals: Damien Wayne pinned Victor Griff

... Preston Quinn pinned Ray Storm ... Final: Damien Wayne beat Preston Quinn. (10-02-10)

—Brandon Bailey

LAWRENCE—Chaotic Wrestling at Plains Community Center: Mikaze pinned New England champion Brian Milonas for the title ... Mike Nice pinned Matt Spectro ... Vortexx & Dudley Dawson vs. Alien Alien & Wesley Thomas ended in a no-contest ... Danny E. pinned Nikki Roxx ... Matt Logan, Chase Del Monte, & Julian Starr beat Max Bauer, Fala, & Kongo ... Elia Markopoulos pinned Hidetaka Suzuki ... Handsome Johnny & Psycho beat Brian Fury & Tony Omega ... Heavyweight champion Brian Milonas pinned Alex Arion. (10-02-10)

—Dave Ratty

WOBURN—Chaotic Wrestling at Woburn Elks Lodge: Mikaze pinned Mike Nice ... Brian Fury pinned Handsome Johnny ... Tag team champions Fala & Kongo beat Alex Arion & Elia Markopoulos and Chase Del Monte & Julian Starr in a triple-threat match ... Vortexx beat Gino Martino by DQ ... Rick Fuller pinned Max Bauer ... Tommaso Ciampa pinned Matt Spectro ... Danny E. & Alexxis beat Nikki Roxx & Mercedes ... Brian Milonas pinned Hidetaka Suzuki. (10-01-10)

—Dave Ratty

MICHIGAN

PORT HURON—TNA at the McMorran Place Arena: X division champion Jay Lethal beat Eric Young ... Knockouts champion Madison Rayne beat Velvet Sky ... World tag team champions The Motor City Machine Guns (Chris Sabin & Alex Shelley) defeated Generation Me (Max & Jeremy Buck) ... Abyss beat Sabu in a Monster's Ball match ... Rob Van Dam beat AJ Styles. (10-24-10)

—Robert Lieblich

SAGINAW—TNA at the Dow Events Center: Rhino pinned Jeff Jarrett ... X division champion Jay Lethal beat Eric Young ... Knockouts champion Madison Rayne beat Velvet Sky ... World tag team champions The Motor City Machine Guns (Chris Sabin & Alex Shelley) defeated Generation Me (Max & Jeremy Buck) ... Abyss beat Sabu in a Monster's Ball match ... Rob Van Dam beat AJ Styles. (10-23-10)

—Robert Lieblich

GRAND RAPIDS—TNA at the Van Andel Arena: Rhino pinned Jeff Jarrett ... X division champion Jay Lethal beat Eric Young ... Knockouts champion Madison Rayne beat Angelina Love ... World tag team champions The Motor City Machine Guns (Chris Sabin & Alex Shelley) defeated Generation Me (Max & Jeremy Buck) ... Abyss beat Sabu in a Monster's Ball match ... Mr. Anderson defeated AJ Styles. (10-21-10)

—Robert Lieblich

MINNESOTA

MINNEAPOLIS—WWE Bragging Rights at the Target Center: U.S. champion Dan-



Rob Van Dam connects with a Rolling Thunder, sending Abyss through a ringside table. Abyss had a month of Monster's Ball matches, losing to RVD and Tommy Dreamer but beating Sabu.

Ile Bryan beat Intercontinental champion **Dolph Ziggler** by submission in a non-title match ... **Nexus** (**John Cena** & **David Ortunga**) beat WWE tag team champions **Cody Rhodes** & **Drew McIntyre** for the title ... **Ted DiBiase Jr.** pinned **Goldust** ... Divas co-champion **Layla** pinned **Natalya** ... World champion **Kane** beat **The Undertaker** in a Buried Alive match ... **Team Smackdown** (**The Big Show**, **Rey Mysterio Jr.**, **Jack Swagger**, **Tyler Reks**, **Kofi Kingston**, **Alberto Del Rio**, & **Edge**) beat **Team Raw** (**The Miz**, **John Morrison**, **C.M. Punk**, **Ezekiel Jackson**, **Santino Marella**, **R-Truth**, & **Sheamus**) ... **Wade Barrett** beat WWE champion **Randy Orton** by DQ. (10-24-10)

—Wayne McCarty

MISSISSIPPI

RALEIGH—School of Hard Knocks Wrestling at the Multi-Purpose Building: **The Enhancement Kid** beat **R.L. Andrews XIII** ... **Blue Puma** & **The Red Dragon** defeated **Chris** & **Eric Black** ... Light heavyweight champion **Rob Anarchy** beat **Steve O'Malley** ... Tag team champions **The Redneck Revolution** defeated **Bulldog** & **The Red Dragon** in a dog collar match ... Heavyweight champion **Rondell Roosevelt** beat **Rick**. (10-16-10)

—Daphne Bowen

HATTIESBURG—Southern Wrestling Alliance at the SWA War Zone: **Festus Fletcher** beat **Max Maverick** ... **Jon Evans** defeated junior heavyweight champion **Dusty Bass** for the title ... **Blue Puma** beat **Lady Death** ... **Jason the Terrible** defeated **Crazy Charlie** ... **The Polynesian Prince** beat **Rick Morgan** ... **J.D. McKay** defeated heavyweight champion **Steve Sawyer** for the title ... **Ireland Pride** (**Steve** & **Michael O'Malley**) beat tag team champions **Chris** & **Eric Black** for the title. (10-09-10)

—Daphne Bowen

HATTIESBURG—Southern Wrestling Alliance at the SWA War Zone: **Max Maverick** beat **Steve O'Malley** ... **Jason the Terrible** defeated **Exile** & **Dusty Bass** in a handicap match ... **Damien Storm** vs.

Festus Fletcher ended in a no-contest ... **Lady Death** beat Women's champion **Brittany Bass** for the title ... **Southern Pride** defeated **Crazy Charlie** & **Damien Storm** ... **Johnny Blade** beat Southern Regional champion **Steve Sawyer** for the title ... **Blade Trinity** & **Billy Wayne** defeated tag team champions **Frankie Thomas** & **DDG** for the title ... **High Voltage** beat heavyweight champion **Turbo Ted** for the title. (10-02-10)

—Daphne Bowen

BROOKHAVEN—Xtreme Outlaw Wrestling at the Lincoln Civic Center: **Ron Horn** pinned **Dustin Wolf** ... All Pro champion **Mitch Toretto** beat **John Thor** by DQ ... **Anton Leveigh** pinned **Jay Blade** ... **The Giant Hillbilly** pinned **John Thor** ... **Anton Leveigh** pinned All Pro champion **Mitch Toretto** for the title. (10-02-10)

—Newt Cox

MISSOURI

ST. LOUIS—Mid-Missouri Wrestling Alliance/Southern Illinois Championship Wrestling at the South Broadway Athletic Club: **Brandon Espinosa** pinned junior heavyweight champion **Johnny Courageous** in a non-title match ... **Chase King** defeated **Max Archer** ... Heritage Wrestling Coalition champion **Donovan Ruddick** beat **Gary Jackson** ... **Brandon Espinosa** won a battle royal, last eliminating **Johnny Courageous** ... **Ace Hawkins** pinned **Jaysin Static** ... **Lumberjack Abe** defeated **Wayne Mitchell** ... **Tony Raze** beat **Chase King**. (10-09-10)

—Patrick Brandmeyer

NEW JERSEY

BELLMAWR—Old Time Wrestling at the Entertainment Center: **Irish Mike** pinned **George Zlotniki** ... **Chris Bohern** defeated **Andy Bivians** ... **Bobby Sheilds** vs. **Matt Miles** ended in a time-limit draw ... **I.M. Smarter** pinned **Anthony Haynes** ... **Dan De Man** vs. **John Graber** ended in a double-countout ... **Chris Bohern** defeated **Brian Johnson** by DQ. (10-16-10)

—Brian Johnson

BELLMAWR—Old Time Wrestling at the Old Time Wrestling Center: **Nick Talent** pinned **Ryan Roxbury** ... **Adam Chandl** pinned **George Zlotniki** ... **Eddie Hawkins** pinned **Mr. Williams** ... **Dan De Man Jones** & **Andd Bivians** beat **Chris Bohern** & **John Graber** ... **Brian Johnson** beat **I.M. Smarter** and **Craig Nash** by DQ ... **C.K. Cross** pinned **Dan De Man Jones**. (10-02-10)

—Brian Johnson

NEW YORK

LIBERTY—Northeast Wrestling at the Liberty High School Gym: **Cedric Alexander** pinned **Ryan McBride** ... **The NOW** defeated **Bull Dredd** & **Caleb Konley** ... **Tommy Dreamer** beat **Robbie E.** ... **Jerry Lawler** pinned **Jake Manning** ... Heavyweight champion **Matt Taven** beat **Brian Anthony** ... **Mickie James** defeated **Mia Yim** ... **Shelton Benjamin** beat **Carlito**. (10-02-10)

—Tim Walker

NORTH CAROLINA

FALCON—Ring Wars Carolina at the Falcon Children's Home Gym: **Tito Reigns** pinned **Big Bad Bully** ... **Akbar Muhammed** pinned **PoPo Da Clown** ... **Andrea the Giant** beat **Skittlz** & **Fruity Joose** in a handicap match ... **The Premiere Kwamere** pinned **Buddy Blackjack** ... **Dragon Quetzal** defeated **Ishkara** ... Heavyweight champion **Ash Walker** defeated **MZC** ... **Hangtyme** beat **Aaron Graham**, **Super Tiger**, **Bam Orter**, and **Da Beast**. (10-02-10)

—Eddie Brown

OHIO

HAMILTON—UWA at Lake Baile's Haunted Hayride: **Tom McClane** defeated **Caleb Ramone** ... **Benjamin Kimera** defeated **Tom McClane** ... **Punk Rock Rebellion** (**C.W. Scott** & **GeeGee**) beat tag team champions **Life Power Church** (**Tony X** & **Todd Mullins**) for the title ... **Mary Elizabeth Monroe** beat **Tom McClane** ... **Cody Hawk** & **Benjamin Kimera** defeated **Brutally Handsome** (**Bellman** & **Donny Redd**) ... Heavyweight champion **Jason Kimera** defeated **J-Roc** in a casket match. (10-09-10)

—Lawrence Riggs

ASHTABULA—Magnum Pro Wrestling at Mother of Sorrows Gym: **Chad Williams** won a 20-man battle royal ... Tri County champion **The Bouncer** defeated **Mike Rayne** ... **Bad to the Bone** beat **The Puerto Rican Wrecking Crew** ... **Lamont Williams** beat **Shawn Blaze** ... **Drew Forge** beat **Joey Diamante** ... **Mr. R.B.I.** defeated **Jay Ice** by DQ ... Heavyweight champion **Seth Allen** beat **Chad Williams**. (10-02-10)

—Johnny James

OKLAHOMA

OKLAHOMA CITY—WWE Smackdown at the Ford Center: **The Undertaker** beat World champion **Kane** by DQ ... WWE champion **Randy Orton** pinned **Sheamus** ... Intercontinental champion **Dolph Ziggler** vs. **MVP** ended in a no-contest ... **Nikki Bella**, **Brie Bella**, **Natalya**, & **Kelly Kelly** defeated **Michelle McCool**, **Maryse**, **Layla**, & **Alicia Fox** ... **Wade Barrett**, **Michael Tarver**, **Justin Gabriel**, **Heath Slater**, & **David Ortunga** beat **The Big Show**

in a handicap match ... The Undertaker beat **C.M. Punk** ... WWE champion Randy Orton defeated **Cody Rhodes** ... World champion Kane vs. **John Cena** ended in a no-contest.
(10-01-10)

—Tank Lamar

OREGON

PORTLAND—WWE Smackdown at the Rose Garden: **Rey Mysterio Jr.** pinned **Cody Rhodes** ... **Jack Swagger** beat **MVP** by submission ... **Alberto Del Rio** defeated **Chris Masters** by submission ... **Edge** pinned Intercontinental champion **Dolph Ziggler** in a non-title match ... **Kaval** beat **The Big Show** in a five-minute challenge match ... **Tyler Reks** pinned **Kaval** ... **Kofi Kingston** pinned **Drew McIntyre**.
(10-15-10)

—Rolph Kratz

PENNSYLVANIA

ALLENTOWN—WCW C-4 at Mountainville Hall: **Z-Barr** beat **Sgt. RJR**, **Drolix**, **Sir David Rose**, **Estraya Diaz**, and **Alexander James** in a six-way ... **Niya** beat **Brittany Force** and **Kacee Carlisle** in a three-way ... **Afa Jr.** pinned **Jay Flyer** ... **Sean Maluta** vs. Hybrid champion **Alex Anthony** ended in a time-limit draw ... **Joe Gomez** pinned **Joe Hardway** ... Tag team champions **Devon Moore & Sabian** vs. **DJ Hyde & Alex Montigo** ended in a no-contest ... **Havoc** defeated **Dan Maff** by DQ ... **A.C. Anderson** pinned **Ricky Reyes** ... **Sugaa** pinned **Doc Daniels** in loser-leaves-town streetfight.
(10-02-10)

—Eric Shaffer

PITTSBURGH—KSWA at the Lawrenceville Moose: **Joey Quervo** defeated **Del Douglas** ... **Vinnie Stone** beat **Mike Buda** & **The Great Toyota** in a handicap match ... **Shane Starr** defeated **Shawn Blanchard** ... **Lord Zoltan** beat **Bobby Badfingers** ... **Tony Johnson**, **Jay Flash**, & **Mitch Napier** defeated **The Jester**, **Drew Belanger**, & **J.P. Goulet** ... **Kris Kash** beat **Lou Martin** by DQ ... **The Latin Assassin & Mike Malachi** defeated **Anthony Alexander & Ali Kaida** ... **The Blood Beast** defeated **Justin Sane** in a Casket match.
(10-02-10)

—Marty Lyons

SOUTH CAROLINA

FLORENCE—TNA at the Florence Civic Center: **Jeff Jarrett** pinned **Eric Young** ... **Douglas Williams** beat **Brian Kendrick** and **Shannon Moore** in a three-way ... Knockouts champion **Angelina Love** defeated **Madison Rayne** ... World tag team champions **The Motor City Machine Guns** (**Chris Sabin & Alex Shelley**) beat **Beer Money Inc.** (**James Storm & Robert Roode**) ... **Samoa Joe & Rhino** defeated **D'Angelo Dinero & Magnus** ... **Jeff Hardy** pinned **AJ Styles**.
(10-02-10)

—Parker Smith

TENNESSEE

MILLERSVILLE—Southern All-Star Wrestling at the SAW Mill: **Lee Cross** defeated **Diamond Steele** ... **Mike Jablonski** beat **David Matthews** ... **The Wild Boys & Lightning Bolt Kid** defeated **Kevin Weatherby**, **Cody Weatherby**, & **Chris**

Bomb ... **Derrick Neal** beat **Hammerjack** ... **Chris Michaels** defeated **Tracy Smothers**.
(10-01-10)

—Lekisha F. Oliver

TEXAS

GLADEWATER—Texas Elite Wrestling at Wallace Arena: **Archangel** vs. **Mongoose** ended in a no-contest ... **Payne** defeated **Court Caution** ... **Anthony Kraze** defeated **Innovation** champion **Cory Summers** for the title ... **Joey Corman** defeated **Fantastico** by DQ ... **Sean Cordova** defeated **Hunter Dude Preston** ... Heavyweight champion **Chris Preston** beat **Colton Shane** and **Allen Michaels** in a two-fall triple-threat match.
(10-17-10)

—Patrick Wallace

HIDALGO—WWE Smackdown at the State Farm Arena: **Kofi Kingston** beat **Chavo Guerrero Jr.** ... **Husky Harris** defeated **Primo** ... WWE tag team champions **Cody Rhodes & Drew McIntyre** beat **The Hart Dynasty** (**D.H. Smith & Tyson Kidd**) ... **Kelly Kelly** defeated **Layla** ... **MVP** beat Intercontinental champion **Dolph Ziggler** in a non-title match ... **Alberto Del Rio** defeated **Chris Masters** ... **The Big Show** beat **Jack Swagger** ... World champion **Kane** beat **Rey Mysterio Jr.**
(10-06-10)

—Steve Beyer

DALLAS—WWE Hell in a Cell at the American Airlines Center: U.S. champion **Daniel Bryan** beat **John Morrison** and **The Miz** in a triple-threat, submissions-count-anywhere match ... WWE champion **Randy Orton** pinned **Sheamus** in a Hell in a Cell match ... **Edge** pinned **Jack Swagger** ... **Wade Barrett** pinned **John Cena** ... **Natalya** beat Divas champion **Michelle**

McCool by DQ ... World champion **Kane** pinned **The Undertaker** in a Hell in a Cell match.
(10-03-10)

—Steve Beyer

SAN ANTONIO—River City Wrestling at The Good Shepard Lutheran Church Activity Center: **Nemesis** pinned **Ann Dromeda** ... **The Karate Kids** (**JoJo Bravo & Darci Drake**) & **Weazy Woo** defeated **The Texas Hitmen** (**Big Dogg & Skitzo**) & **Joey Spector** ... **Southern Sex Appeal** (**Danny Mathews & Scott McKenzie**) beat **The Gulf Coast Connection** (**Rudy Russo & Ben Galvan**) to advance to the second round of the tag team tournament ... **Andy Dalton** vs. **SKAM.13** ended in a no-contest ... RCW champion **Alissa Flash** pinned **Mercedes Martinez**.
(10-02-10)

—William L. Hamilton

TYLER—WWE Raw at the Oil Palace: U.S. champion **Daniel Bryan** beat **The Miz** by submission ... **Alberto Del Rio** beat **Chris Masters** by submission ... Intercontinental champion **Dolph Ziggler** pinned **Kofi Kingston** ... **Kelly Kelly & Melina** beat **Layla & Alicia Fox** ... WWE champion **Randy Orton** pinned **Sheamus** ... World tag team champions **The Hart Dynasty** (**D.H. Smith & Tyson Kidd**) defeated **Cody Rhodes & Drew McIntyre** ... World champion **Kane** pinned **The Big Show**.
(10-02-10)

—Steve Beyer

UTAH

WEST VALLEY CITY—WWE at the Maverik Center: WWE tag team champions **Cody Rhodes & Drew McIntyre** defeated **Santino Marella & Vladimir Kozlov** ... **Alberto Del Rio** beat **MVP** by submission ... **John Morrison & R-Truth**



Already battling long odds in a handicap match, Samoa Joe received practically no help from partner Jeff Jarrett. Joe took the pinfall loss but got a measure of revenge against Jarrett, beating him soundly in a series of subsequent one-on-one encounters around the country.

defeated Nexus (Heath Slater & David Ortunga) ... Sheamus pinned Mark Henry ... Edge pinned Jack Swagger ... Layla pinned Melina ... WWE champion Randy Orton pinned Wade Barrett. (10-17-10)

—Rene Grassau

VIRGINIA

MATTAPONI—NWA Fusion at King and Queen Elementary School: Mike Booth vs. Scotty Blaze ended in a time-limit draw ... Victor Griff beat Sterling Williams ... Brandon Day beat The American Ranger ... The Geordie Bulldogs (Sean & Marky Denny) defeated A-1 (Zak Hilton & Jeff Early), Preston Quinn & Larry Horsley, and Da New Bloodz (Da Gift & Da Curse) to win the tag team title ... The Amazing Sanchez pinned Mister Midnite ... Krotch & The Executioner defeated Stephon Smith & Larry McHale ... Damien Wayne pinned Mark Bravura to win the King of the Mid-Atlantic tournament and the vacant Continental heavyweight title. (10-16-10)

—Brandon Bailey

WEST POINT—NWA Fusion at the West Point Crab Carnival: King of the Mid-Atlantic Blue Bracket, Quarterfinals: Larry Horsley defeated Da Curse ... Zach Hilton beat Stephon Smith ... Da Gift beat Jeff Early by DQ ... Mark Bravura beat Larry McHale ... Semifinals: Larry Horsley beat Zach Hilton ... Mark Bravura defeated Da Curse ... Final: Mark Bravura beat Larry Horsley. (10-02-10)

—Brandon Bailey

HAMPTON—Southside Pro Wrestling at Langley Speedway: Nathan Mustang pinned Swade Lewis ... Ryan Nuzzi defeated Sam Bass ... Monster Mike beat Carlos Hotness by DQ ... Zak Hilton defeated Brandon Day & Krotch in a three-way elimination match ... Victor Griff beat Phil Brown by DQ ... Chase Owens pinned Curtis Mack ... Ray Storm defeated Ricky Morton ... Mark Anthony pinned Sterling Williams. (10-01-10)

—Wesley Smith Jr.

WASHINGTON

KENNEWICK—WWE at the Toyota Center: Goldust pinned Ted DiBiase Jr. ... Ezekiel Jackson pinned Zack Ryder ... The Hart Dynasty (D.H. Smith & Tyson Kidd) defeated Jimmy & Jey Uso ... U.S. champion Daniel Bryan beat Dolph Ziggler ... Gail Kim & Eve Torres defeated Maryse & Alicia Fox ... Kofi Kingston pinned C.M. Punk ... The Big Show pinned The Miz. (10-16-10)

—Ashley Emerson

SPOKANE—WWE Raw at the Spokane Arena: Goldust pinned Ted DiBiase Jr. ... Chris Masters beat Alex Riley ... Ezekiel Jackson beat Zack Ryder ... The Hart Dynasty (D.H. Smith & Tyson Kidd) defeated Jimmy & Jey Uso ... U.S. champion Daniel Bryan beat The Miz by submission ... Melina & Natalya defeated Maryse & Alicia Fox ... Nexus (Wade Barrett & Justin Gabriel) defeated John Morrison & R-Truth ... WWE champion Randy Orton beat Sheamus in a cage match. (10-15-10)

—Ashley Emerson

SEATTLE—WWE Raw at the Key Arena: R-Truth pinned Ted DiBiase Jr. ... John Morrison pinned Tyson Kidd in a Bragging Rights qualifier ... Santino Marella pinned Zack Ryder in a Bragging Rights qualifier ... WWE champion Randy Orton pinned Justin Gabriel ... Sheamus pinned U.S. champion Daniel Bryan in a non-title Bragging Rights qualifier ... C.M. Punk pinned Evan Bourne in a Bragging Rights qualifier ... The Miz pinned John Cena in a Bragging Rights qualifier. (10-11-10)

—Ashley Emerson

YAKIMA—WWE Raw at the Yakima Valley Sun Dome: Goldust pinned Ted DiBiase Jr. ... Ezekiel Jackson beat William Regal by submission ... Nexus (Heath Slater & David Ortunga) beat Santino Marella & Kozlov ... U.S. champion Daniel Bryan pinned John Morrison ... Eve Torres & Melina defeated Maryse & Alicia Fox ... C.M. Punk pinned R-Truth ... WWE champion Randy Orton beat Sheamus and Wade Barrett in a three-way. (10-10-10)

—Ashley Emerson

WEST VIRGINIA

DANVILLE—ASW at the Community Center: Bryan Cross defeated Ryuujin and Sheik Al-Ahmad in a three-way ... Shane Storm defeated Allen Lynch ... Mickie Knuckles beat Jesse Belle ... The Foodstamp Express defeated tag team champions The Cereal Killers for the title ... Jake Manning beat heavyweight champion Trix Nasty in a lumberjack match for the title ... Paul London defeated Aaron Draven ... Legends champion Ricky Morton defeated Tracy Smothers. (10-09-10)

—Adam Montgomery

MOUNDSVILLE—Black Diamond Wrestling at Moundsville Eagles: Chest Flexor beat Doc Remedy ... Nikita Allanov beat Cory Futuristic ... Jock Samson defeated Dash Bennett ... The Bouncer & Rock Lobster defeated tag team champions Vinnie Stone & Edrick Everhart for the title ... Zero vs. Jake Garrett ended in a double-DQ ... Robert Parker Williams & Terry Ring beat Sean Dahmer in a handicap match ... Heavyweight champion Jason Gory beat Dan Sandwich by reverse decision ... Grea Cingsley defeated Blue Dragon in a casket match. (10-03-10)

—Johnny James

WISCONSIN

MADISON—Supreme Championship Wrestling at the Gordon Arena: Karma & Roger Blade beat Joey Palumbo & J-Bly ... Nic Noble pinned Eric Draven ... The



Matt Morgan and James Storm successfully fend off a flying Sabu during the Lethal Lockdown match pitting the EV2.0 against Fortune. Little did anyone know that a plan had already been enacted whereby the two factions would be working together to help Hulk Hogan and Eric Bischoff seize control of the company.

Amazing Pooky pinned Kharn Alexander ... Roger Blade & Jack Manson beat Big & Tasty ... Jerry Andrews Anderson beat Dez and Tommie Foreman in a triple-threat ... Leo Lyons pinned Misery ... HNIC defeated Matt Atreya & Dynamite Derrick ... Ricky Ruckus, Kris Kaliber, & Rob Conway defeated Damien Divine, Vito Andretti, & The Zodiac. (10-16-10)

—Freddie Peavler

RACINE—TNA at the Racine Civic Center: Samoa Joe pinned Jeff Jarrett ... X division champion Jay Lethal pinned Douglas Williams ... Beer Money Inc. (James Storm & Robert Roode) defeated Orlando Jordan & Eric Young ... Matt Morgan beat Rhino ... Tommy Dreamer beat Abyss in a Monster's Ball match. (10-15-10)

—Garrett Granderson

INTERNATIONAL

CANADA

WINNIPEG, MB—WWE at the MTS Centre: U.S. champion Daniel Bryan beat Intercontinental champion Dolph Ziggler by submission in a non-title match ... Nexus (Wade Barrett & David Ortunga) beat Kofi Kingston & Mark Henry ... Eve Torres defeated Alicia Fox ... The Miz

pinned John Morrison ... Edge & Rey Mysterio Jr. beat Jack Swagger & Alberto Del Rio ... Cody Rhodes & Drew McIntyre defeated The Hart Dynasty (D.H. Smith & Tyson Kidd) ... World champion Kane pinned The Big Show ... WWE champion Randy Orton pinned Sheamus.
(10-23-10)

—Boyd Braxton

EDMONTON, AB—WWE Smackdown at Rexall Place: The Big Show, Rey Mysterio Jr., & Kofi Kingston beat The Miz, Ezekiel Jackson, & Sheamus ... Jack Swagger beat Santino Marella by submission ... Alberto Del Rio beat John Morrison by submission ... Edge beat C.M. Punk by DQ ... Natalya & Kelly Kelly defeated Michelle McCool & Layla ... WWE champion Randy Orton pinned World champion Kane in a non-title match.
(10-22-10)

—Boyd Braxton

CALGARY, AB—WWE Raw at the Scotiabank Saddledome: The Hart Dynasty (D.H. Smith & Tyson Kidd) beat WWE tag team champions Drew McIntyre & Cody Rhodes for the title ... Goldust pinned Zack Ryder ... John Cena & Randy Orton beat Husky Harris & Michael McGillicutty ... Natalya beat Alicia Fox by submission ... The Big Show vs. The Miz ended in a no-contest ... Edge and The Big Show won a Smackdown/Raw battle royal.
(10-18-10)

—Boyd Braxton

NEW WESTMINSTER, BC—All Star Wrestling at Carpenter's Hall: Toga Boy & Volcano defeated Terry Tomko & Adam Virtue ... Adam Ryder defeated Nelson Creed ... Kyle Sebastian beat Mark Posey ... Seth Knight vs. Great Kasaki ended in a no-contest ... Vance Nevada & Michelle Starr defeated Disco Fury & Massive Damage ... Mr. India beat Lak Siddartha in a streetfight.
(10-08-10)

—Richard Berger

WELLAND, ON—Moonshine Branded Wrestling at the Holy Trinity Church: Zakk Atticuss pinned Topher Whiteman ... Johnny Wave pinned Nick Vickers ... Jeff Black & Joey Allen defeated Ice & EZE ... Zack Storm pinned Rex Atkins ... Sabrina Kyle pinned Josh Rogen ... The Entourage beat Riot Act and Team Shake & Bake in an elimination scramble match ... PWA Niagara champion Pistol Pete pinned Primo Scordino ... Scotty O'Shea defeated Rip Impact and Zack Storm in a three-way elimination match to win the vacant heavyweight title.
(10-03-10)

—Matthew Terry

GERMANY

ROTH—German Wrestling Promotion at the Mehrzweckhalle: Jonny Strom defeated Matt Cross ... Steve Douglas defeated Farmer Joe ... Robbie Mireno beat Corvus & Andrew Patterson ... Pac defeated Jody Fleisch ... Steve Douglas beat Jonny



The brilliance of Mr. Anderson, Kurt Angle, and Jeff Hardy was on full display as the three unleashed every move in their arsenals—often simultaneously—in an effort to claim the vacant World title (above). Unfortunately, the outcome of the match would be decided by the nefarious Hogan and Bischoff, who formed Immortal upon the crowning of Hardy. Hardy, Abyss, and Jarrett may not win any spelling bees, but they are proud members of the modern-day version of the NWO (below).



Storm ... Amazing Red defeated Sonjay Dutt ... Murat Bosporus vs. Absolute Andy vs. Joe E. Legend ended with Bosporus and Legend taking a fall apiece.
(10-02-10)

—David Schmida

OBERHAUSEN—Westside Xtreme Wrestling at the Saint: 2Face defeated Robert Dreissker ... Emil Sitoci defeated Mark Haskins ... Rico Bushido beat Paul Tracey ... Thumbtack Jack defeated Masada ... Karsten Beck beat Jason Hendrix ... Bad Bones & Carnage defeated Mark Haskins & 2Face ... Big Van Walter defeated Zack Sabre Jr. ... Hate beat Ulf Hermann.
(10-02-10)

—David Schmida

JAPAN

TOKYO—New Japan Pro Wrestling at the New Sumo Hall: Bad Intentions (Giant Bernard & Karl Anderson) & Tiger Mask defeated Takashi Iizuka, Takahashi Yujiro, & Tomohiro Ishii ... Masato Tanaka, Jado, & Gedo defeated Jushin Thunder Liger, Wataru Inoue, & Tomoaki Honma ... TAJIRI defeated Toru Yano ... Kota Ibushi & Kenny Omega beat junior tag team champions Prince Devitt & Ryusuke Taguchi for the title ... Yuji Nagata & Koji Kanemoto defeated Go Shiozaki & Atsushi Aoki ... Hirooki Goto beat Shinsuke Nakamura ... Hiroshi Tanahashi defeated Tetsuya Naito ... Satoshi Kojima beat IWGP champion Togi Makabe for the title.
(10-11-10)

—John Fox

PWI CLASSIC

FROM THE SEPTEMBER 1978 ISSUE OF THE WRESTLER



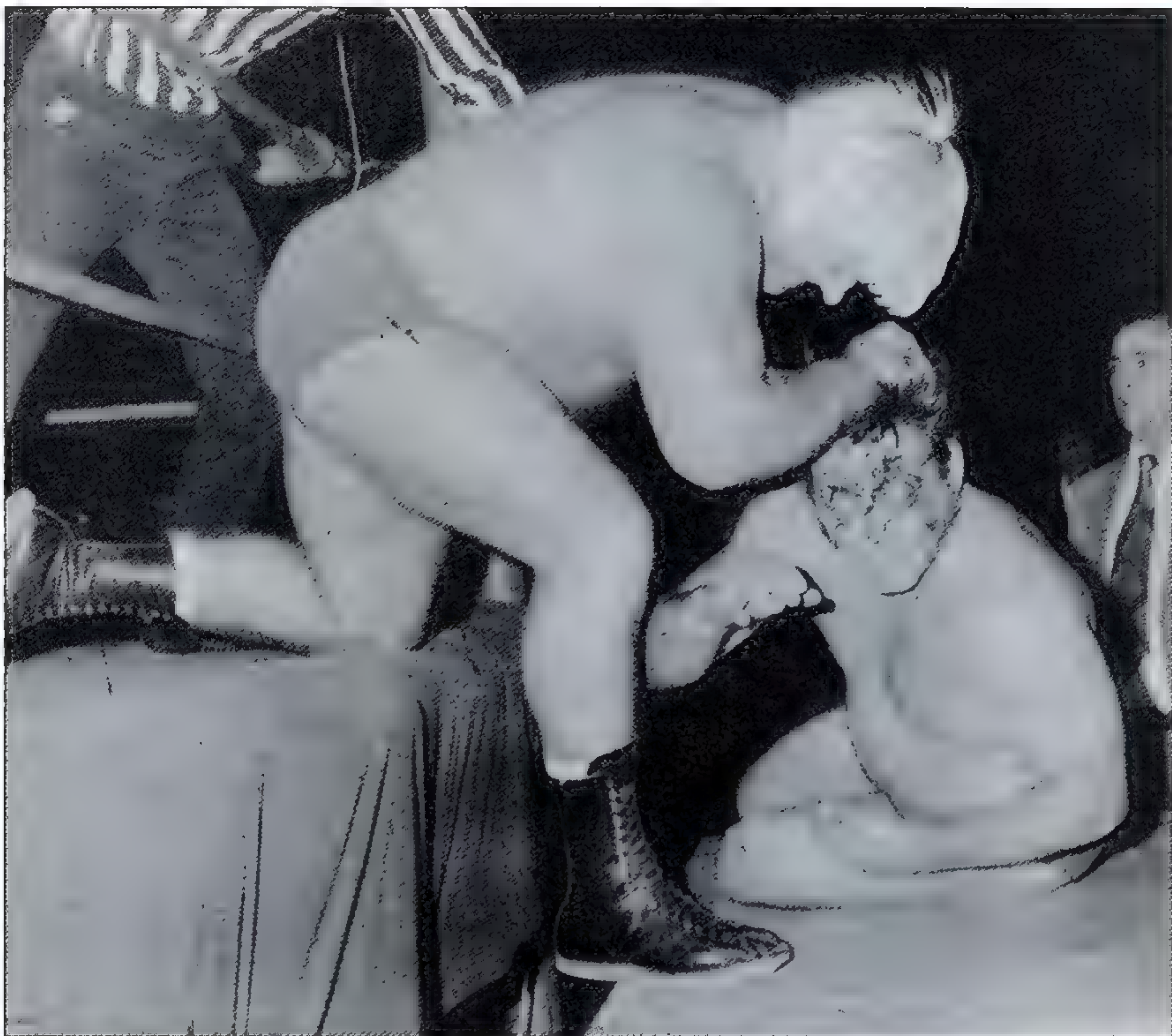
A MAN NAMED CRUSHER

Just as wrestling has always had its good guys and bad guys, there have also been those who seem to walk on both sides of the line. WWE "good guy" Randy Orton hasn't abandoned his violent ways one bit, yet the fans now cheer him. Decades earlier, former AWA champ The Crusher experienced the same confusing phenomenon

CRUSHER WOULD BE the first to insist that *he* is not the one who has changed, but that the times have just caught up with him. Where once jeers and distaste characterized the fans' response to his wrestling style, now there is only warmth and affection.

His raucous lifestyle is still the same: beer drinking in considerable quantities as part of the training "regimen"; carousing with women of all sorts of size and shape; long evenings spent with old friends swapping stories not fit for grammar school and remarks improper for family dinners.

"I'm still the same ol' fun-loving Crusher I always was," he said, twisting off the top of a beer bottle. "I could never figure out



Much Like Randy Orton of today, Crusher never abandoned his violent, often illegal, tactics in the ring. And just as with Orton, the fans seemingly came to appreciate Crusher's sadistic streak.

why the fans didn't take to me. I guess when I started pounding on the bad dudes, the fans started whooping and cheering and seeing that ol' Crusher wasn't such a bad sort after all. Hey, my buddies could've told them that long ago."

For the first part of his career, Crusher was a notorious rule-breaker. Then, when he entered the AWA, he started wrestling his former sadistic colleagues. At that point, the fan metamorphosis began.

"Again, it wasn't anything I did. I was still the same. Only my opponents were different," Crusher said. "Yeah, maybe I mellowed a

little, but not all that much.

"It was a society thing. For a while, my lifestyle, the down-home truck driver way of life was in disfavor. Now, what with the hippie generation turning conservative and a beer guzzler like Billy Carter parading around making it a badge of honor to have a pot full of beer, my way of life is accepted more."

Interestingly enough, the careers of Crusher and Bruiser parallel each other. Like Crusher, Bruiser's reputation was initially based on the groans of dismembered opponents and the jeers of outraged fans. And while the tune may have changed, the lyrics remain the same.

"Me and Bruiser are real good friends. As you know, we've teamed up together and gotten to be good buddies. Bruiser had his problems, also with his way of living, though not as much as me.

"The fans didn't like him. Now they do. You figure it out."

With the admitted tempering of nature comes a street-wise intelligence appealing for its blunt honesty.

"I love wrestling and I don't make no bones about it. Lots of people are afraid to say they love their work, or their country, or whatever.

"I'm just a friendly guy that tries to be honest with everyone. I've

THE WRESTLER RATINGS

SEPTEMBER 1978

WWF

- 1—Bob Backlund
- 2—Spiros Arion
- 3—George Steele
- 4—Superstar Graham
- 5—Dusty Rhodes
- 6—Tatsumi Fujinami
- 7—Mil Mascaras
- 8—Ken Patera
- 9—Dino Bravo
- 10—Peter Maivia

AWA

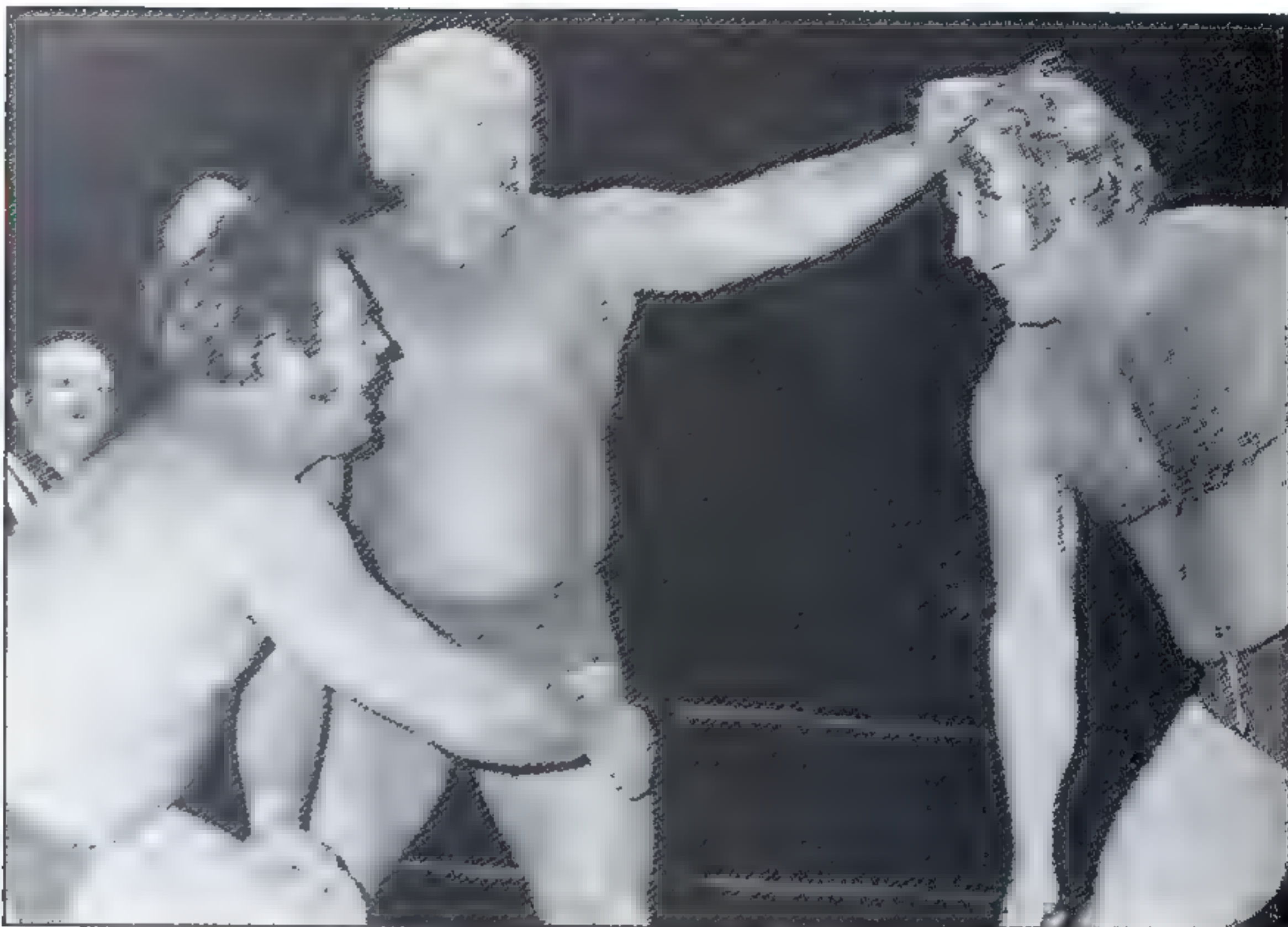
- 1—Nick Bockwinkel
- 2—Crusher
- 3—Ray Stevens
- 4—Billy Robinson
- 5—Pat Patterson
- 6—Bob Orton Jr.
- 7—Jim Brunzell
- 8—Greg Gagne
- 9—Blackjack Lanza
- 10—Angelo Mosca

NWA

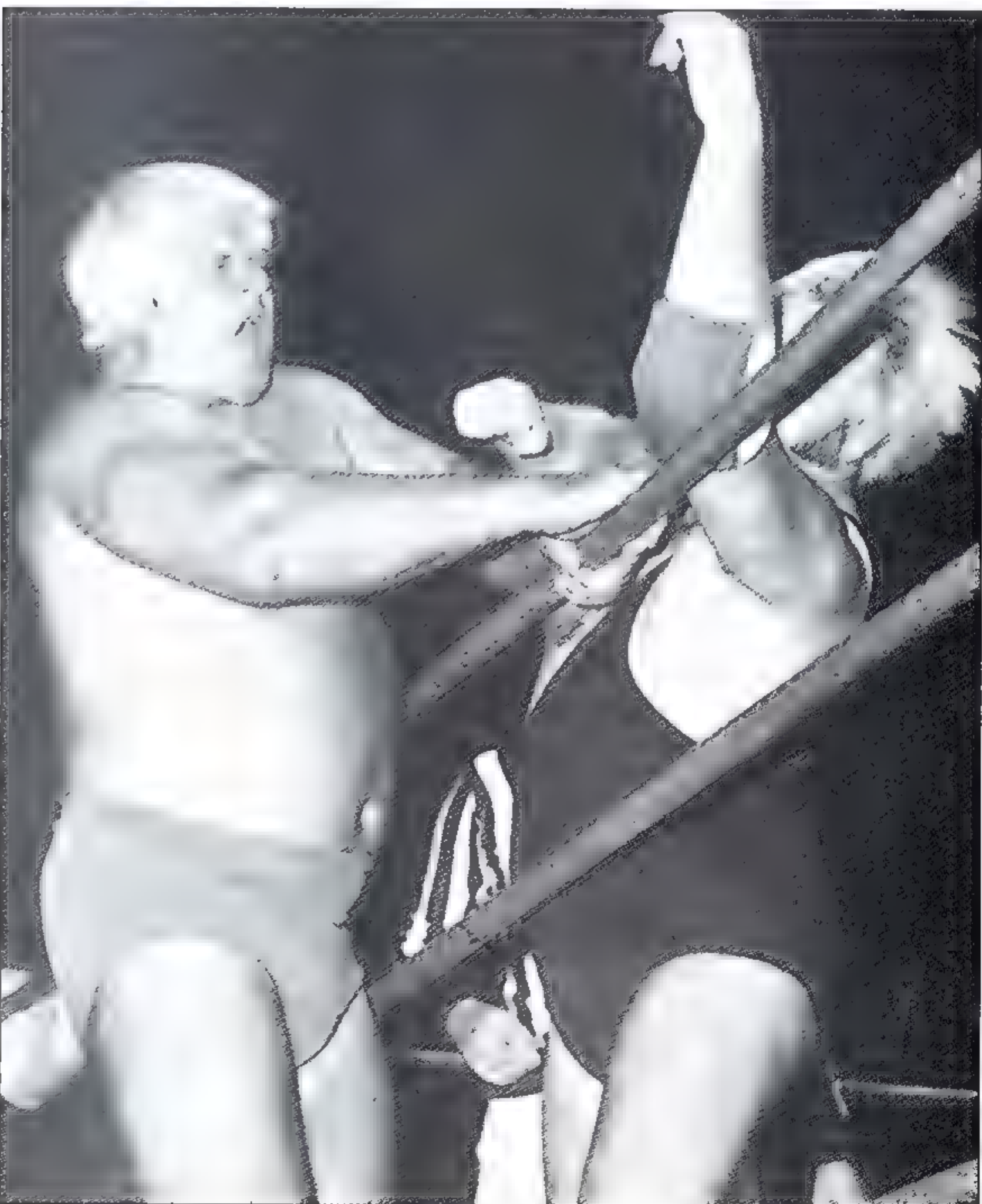
- 1—Harley Race
- 2—Dusty Rhodes
- 3—Jack Brisco
- 4—Ric Flair
- 5—Stan Hansen
- 6—Blackjack Mulligan
- 7—Paul Jones
- 8—Rick Steamboat
- 9—Terry Funk
- 10—Dick Slater

TAG TEAMS

- 1—Paul Jones & Rick Steamboat
- 2—Dino Bravo & Dominic DiNucci
- 3—Greg Gagne & Jim Brunzell
- 4—Mike Graham & Steve Keirn
- 5—Jack & Jerry Brisco
- 6—The Lumberjacks
- 7—Luke & Superstar Graham
- 8—Ray Stevens & Pat Patterson
- 9—The Valiant Brothers
- 10—Ric Flair & Greg Valentine



Part of Crusher's appeal was his willingness to fight hated villains such as Nick Bockwinkel and Ray Stevens, even though Crusher himself was a proud member of the rulebreaking set. Perhaps Orton's cruelty is more forgivable when he's directing it against the likes of Sheamus or Chris Jericho.



Crusher admitted that age mellowed him, yet he never lost his edge when it came to Bobby Heenan. Orton, on the other hand, is still a very young man who seems eager to hurt any wrestler WWE puts before him.

been in bars where a different sort of dude has walked in, maybe with hair kinda long. A couple of guys would pass a remark, but I'd stop them right there. A person is a person and I don't care none whether his hair is over his behind or if his skin is purple.

"And that's how I approach my opponents. I'll give the guy the benefit of the doubt. When he proves me wrong, I'll smash his face in. Same with someone I'll meet on the street. I'll treat him like I'd treat anyone. If he shows me he's a mean dude, I'll treat him accordingly."

Crusher's beguiling frankness is reaffirmed by the plaudits accorded him by his friends.

"What a hell of a guy," said Bruiser. "He'd give you the shirt off his back, if you know what I mean. And he's a damn good wrestler, one of the best."

"He deserves all the praise he's been getting. He's a prince of a man."

"I wrestled both of them, Bruiser and Crusher, when they were considered bad guys," said veteran Wilbur Snyder. "Even then I knew they were good guys. Crusher is a fine man, a real honest person who'll tell you what's on his mind and never play games with you. That's the type of friend you want."

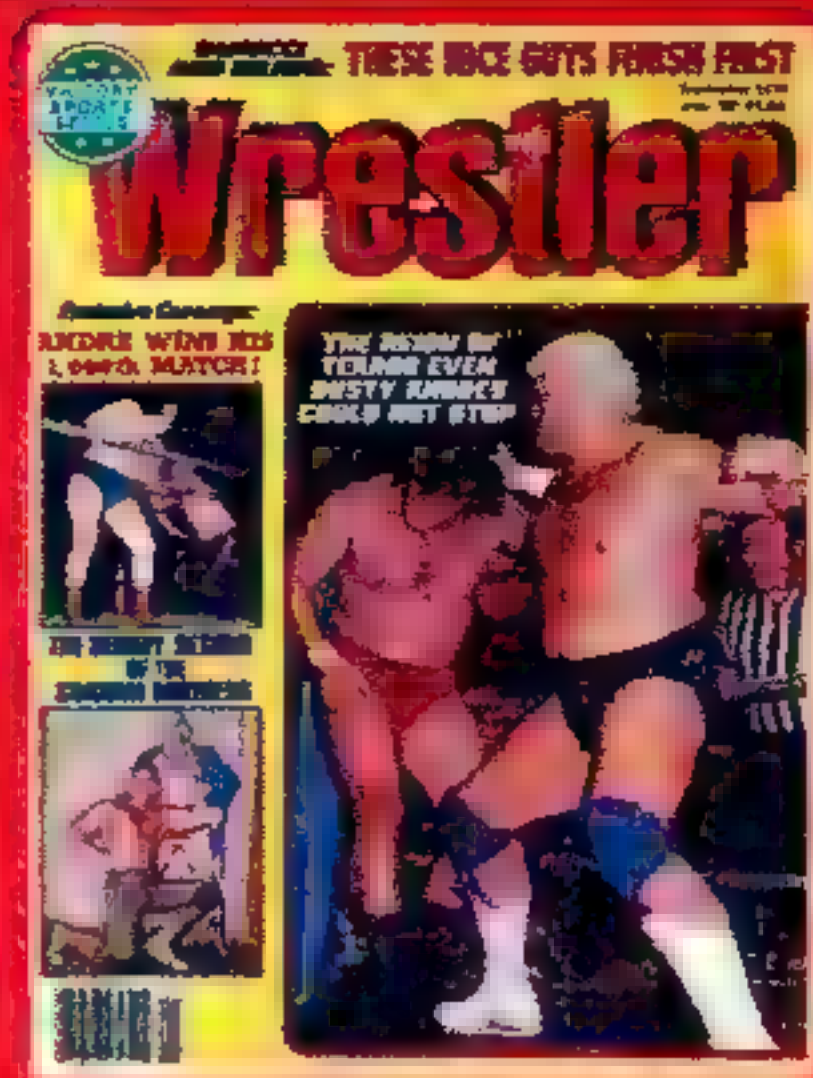
Now that Crusher has entered the prime of his life, in and out of the ring, he has found a compelling philosophy he's more than willing to share with an interested audience.

"Have fun, baby. Go out and live things up, that's what I say." He tore the cap from another beer bottle. "Have laughs, have good friends, love your work, family, and country, but not necessarily in that order."

"And don't worry about what people say. Sooner or later, they'll understand you. And if they don't," he shrugged, "if they don't, make sure you understand yourself." □

THE WRESTLER, SEPTEMBER 1978

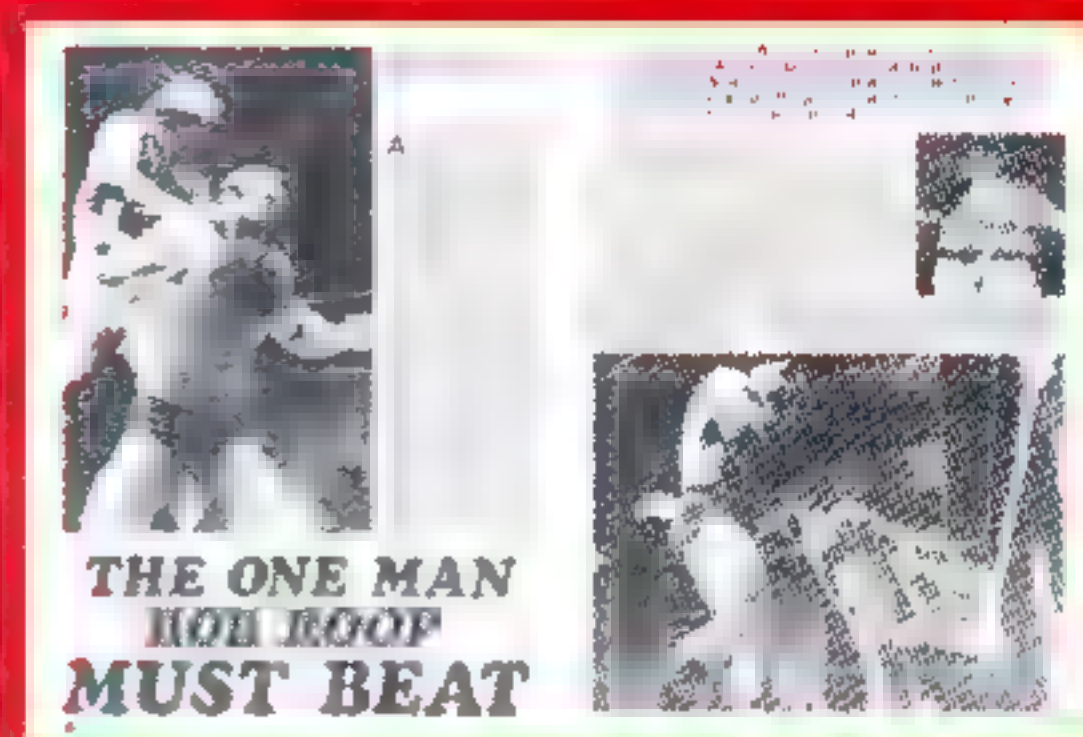
The Cover: This issue of *The Wrestler* featured Andre the Giant overpowering Killer Karl Krupp to earn his 1,000th victory in the ring. Also pictured was Dusty Rhodes, whom the NWA fans anointed as savior to protect the organization from an invading Spiros Aron and a relatively tame shot of Superstar Billy and "Crazy" Luke Graham, who had reunited to kick off a bloodletting in the WWWF.



Past Meets Future. Ric Flair's climb to the NWA World title was underway when he was ordered to wrestle former champ Pat O'Connor. Flair could hardly contain his disrespect for O'Connor and reluctantly took the match. Though he used cruel tactics at times, Flair surprised everyone by passing this "litmus" test with a scientific performance for the ages.



His Own Worst Enemy. Bob Roop had entered pro wrestling as a highly touted amateur. But even after several years in the sport, he had yet to win a major championship in any federation. Whatever was holding Roop back manifested itself in one critical bout against Ivan Putski.



Feeling The Heat. The rather abrupt Harley Race was proud of his brutally merciless style of wrestling. Until we compared him to The Sheik. Outraged, Race became determined to show us how unfair and inaccurate the comparison was.



Nice Guys Finish First. While guts, guile, and experience were all crucial elements of new WWF tag team champions Domenico DeNucci's and Dino Bravo's success, another element—decency—was perhaps the one quality both wrestlers and their fans could cherish most.



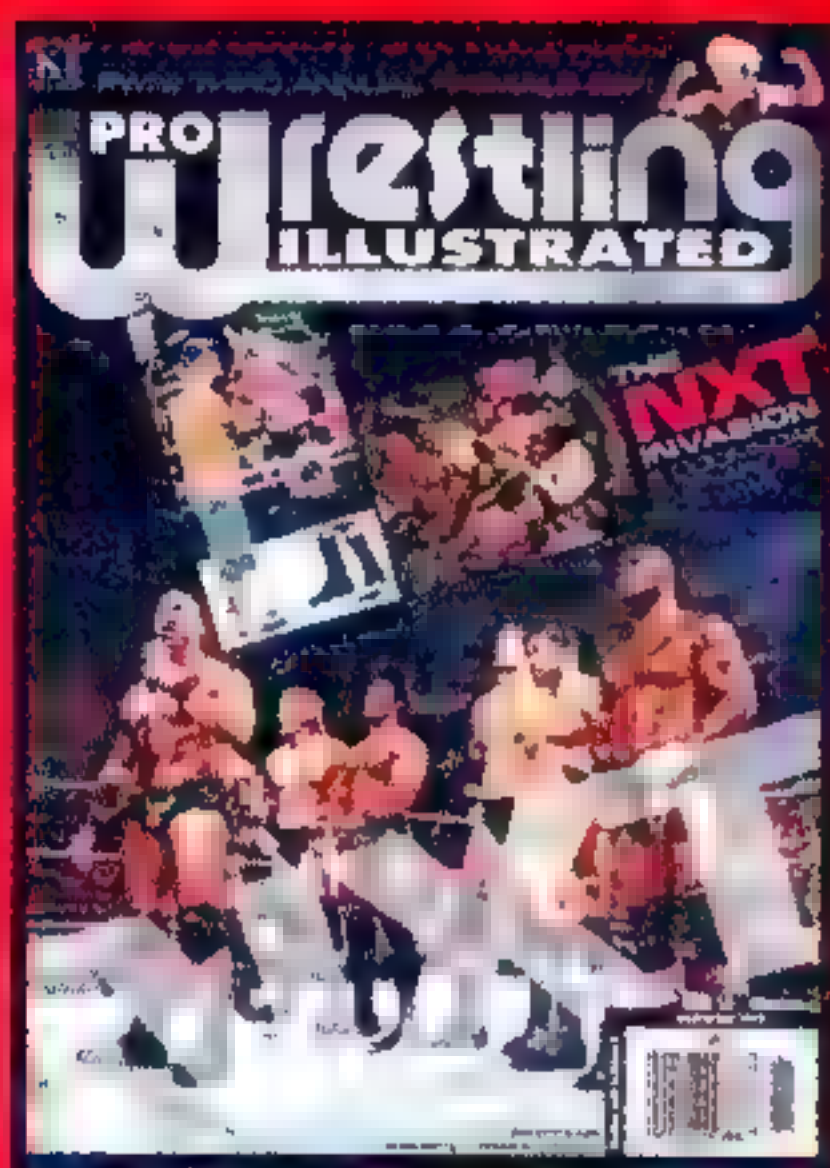
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THE NXT INVASION



Wade Barrett and his Nexus buddies may not have been 100 percent satisfied with the impact they made in WWE, but they certainly can't complain about the impact they've made with us. Our November 2010 issue featured Nexus on the cover. It was a bold move considering the group's relative inexperience, but, let's face it, they had become impossible to ignore.

Also on the cover was 2010's top-rated female wrestler, Michelle McCool. Reader reaction to our choice of McCool as number one in the "Female 50" was mixed.

"No woman worked harder to improve than McCool did last year," wrote reader Trish Technica. "She definitely deserves the top spot."

"The only reason Michelle McCool gets any face time on Smackdown is because she's married to The Undertaker," wrote Tara Mercer. "Otherwise, she's just another average-looking model-type with very poor wrestling skills. She shouldn't be on the list at all, let alone number one."

VERY DISAPPOINTED FAN

Is anyone else who watches WWE just as sick and tired of the "bro-mance" between Michael Cole and The Miz as I am? I am so tired of hearing Cole worship that idiot Miz that I'm about ready to quit watching WWE programming altogether.

The Miz is no great competitor. He is just a big-mouthed, one-move blow-hard! Why is WWE doing so much to promote this glorified preliminary bum? He has no wrestling skill whatsoever. His matches are all kicks, punches, and interference from his high-school boyfriend, Alex Riley.

As for Riley, his character—the world's oldest adolescent—is the dumbest idea since Greg Valentine dyed his hair black!

The only NXT "rookies" that deserves to be in WWE are Daniel Bryan, Kaval, and Michael McGillicutty. The Nexus aren't good enough to main-event a high school gymnasium wrestling show. Just what I wanted to see—a low-rate Spirit Squad imitation.

STEVEN GARMAN
Graterford, PA

MORGAN MISUSED

Matt Morgan has tremendous potential, but apparently the powers-that-be in TNA don't think so. They keep burying Morgan each week on *Impact*.

Brian Kendrick's recent win over Morgan on *Impact* was the icing on the cake.

"The Blueprint" has the size,



Some think Alex Riley has a bright future in WWE, but reader Steven Garman may not be around to see it, as he has threatened to give up WWE programming if he has to endure much more of Riley or The Miz.



If the "Female 50" ranking were based solely on beauty, TNA's Lacey Von Erich would have made a strong push for the top spot. However, her shortcomings in the ring landed her on the outside looking in, much to the disappointment of reader Kelly Johnston.

strength, ability, and attitude to lead TNA to the top and boldly take the company into the future. I honestly believe he is main-event and world championship material. But, TNA treats Morgan little better than a preliminary nobody. If TNA gave Morgan a push, or at least promoted him properly, I feel the fans would rally behind him.

MIKE FACCIANI
Johnstown, PA

LUCK OF THE IRISH

Since Sheamus is getting a big push in WWE and he's Irish, could it be that he is Mr. McMahon's long lost son? It wasn't the leprechaun!

RICH BROWN
Detroit, MI

LACEY M.I.A.

I was disappointed that Lacey Von Erich was not included in the

"Female 50" rankings. I know she is not a very graceful wrestler, and has more style than substance as a grappler, but I still feel she's an overall better performer than Melissa Coates, Kellie Skater, Tiffany, and Naomi Night, to name a few. That is my only quarrel with your list.

KELLY JOHNSTON
South Burlington, VT

WHAT? NO MELINA?

I just finished reading your 2010 "Female 50" special section, and have one question—How could Melina be left off this list? Obviously, somebody at your magazine made a very big mistake!

MAHMOOD BAJIRANI
London, England

[Editor's Note: Nobody made

a mistake. It was the consensus among the editors that Melina missed too much time during the evaluation period due to injury to be included in this year's rankings.]

MARRIAGE OF CONVENIENCE

Aside from the fact that it was clear that neither wrestler was going anywhere fast as singles in Smackdown, I can't understand how Cody Rhodes and Drew McIntyre came to be a tag team, much less the WWE World champions. As far as I am concerned, they are virtually the same person—two arrogant losers who think they're great but have done nothing at all to support their lofty opinion of themselves.

I don't foresee a long title reign for this team at all. They were thrown together out of convenience, and lack the humility to form a cohesive unit. The first good challenger to face them will probably take the straps right off them.

GERALD VASILLO
Rahway, NJ

BYE, BYE, BLACK

While most Ring of Honor fans are taking shots at Tyler Black for signing with WWE, I would like to extend my most sincere thanks and wish Tyler good luck as he enters a new phase of his career.

It saddens me that the same people who once clamored for him are now taking pot shots at him for following the money to WWE. I feel the majority of these critics are hypocrites that would do the same thing Black did if they had an opportunity.

Black is a young, talented wrestler who deserves the financial security a full-time job in WWE would bring to him and his family. So, best of luck, Tyler. I hope to see you on *Raw* or *Smackdown* soon.

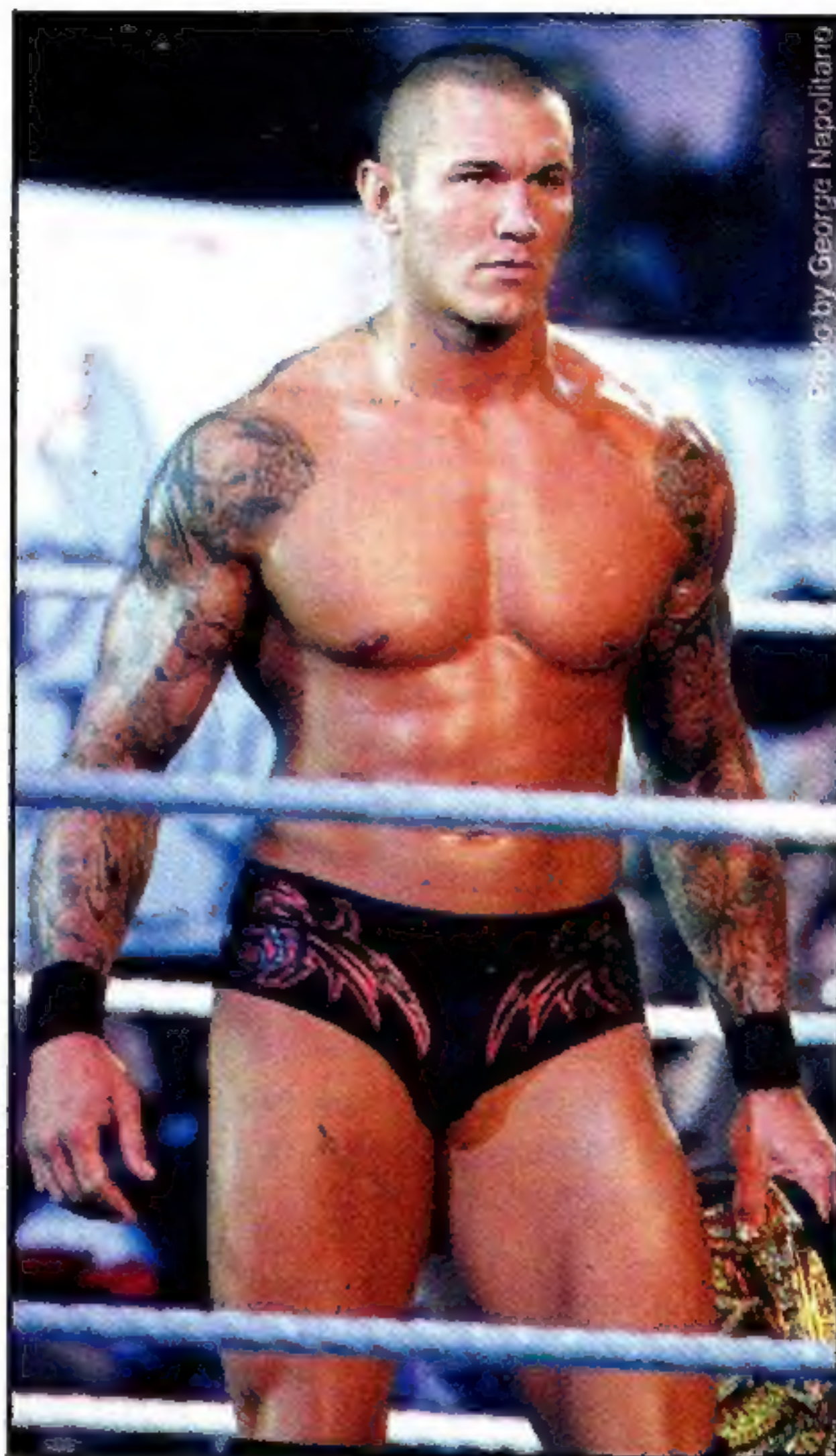
ROE ALTADONNA
Chicago, IL □

PWI OFFICIAL RATINGS

FOR PERIOD ENDED OCTOBER 26, 2010

TOP 10

- 1 RANDY ORTON**
245, St. Louis, MO
(3) WWE heavyweight champion
- 2 KANE**
323, Hell
(1) WWE World champion
- 3 SATOSHI KOJIMA**
250, Tokyo, Japan
(-) IWGP heavyweight champion
- 4 JEFF HARDY**
215, Cameron, NC
(-) TNA World champion
- 5 TAKASHI SUGIURA**
220, Nagayo, Japan
(-) GHC heavyweight champion
- 6 RODERICK STRONG**
215, Tampa, FL
(-) Ring of Honor heavyweight champion
- 7 ADAM PEARCE**
248, San Diego, CA
(-) NWA heavyweight champion
- 8 SUWAMA**
265, Kanagawa, Japan
(-) AJPW Triple Crown champion
- 9 KURT ANGLE**
240, Pittsburgh, PA
(4) No. 1 contender TNA World title
- 10 WADE BARRETT**
265, Manchester, England
(-) No. 1 contender WWE title



Randy Orton

TAG TEAMS

- 1 ALEX SHELLEY & CHRIS SABIN**
Combined weight: 420 pounds
(1) TNA World tag team champions
- 2 CHRIS HERO & CLAUDIO CASTAGNOLI**
Combined weight: 475 pounds
(4) ROH tag team champions
- 3 GIANT BERNARD & KARL ANDERSON**
Combined weight: 571 pounds
(8) IWGP tag team champions
- 4 JEREMY & MAX BUCK**
Combined weight: 350 pounds
(-) No. 1 contenders TNA World tag team title
- 5 TAKOMA SANO & YOSHIHIRO TAKAYAMA**
Combined weight: 530 pounds
(-) GHC tag team champions
- 6 DERRICK BATEMAN & JOHNNY CURTIS**
Combined weight: 450 pounds
(-) FCW tag team champions
- 7 HEATH SLATER & JUSTIN GABRIEL**
Combined weight: 447 pounds
(-) WWE Unified tag team champions
- 8 KENNY OMEGA & KOTA IBUSHI**
Combined weight: 390 pounds
(-) IWGP Jr. heavyweight tag team champions
- 9 ROBERT ROODE & JAMES STORM**
Combined weight: 470 pounds
(3) No. 2 contenders TNA World tag team title
- 10 TYSON KIDD & DAVID HART SMITH**
Combined weight: 445 pounds
(2) No. 1 contenders WWE tag team title

RAW

WWE Champion:

- RANDY ORTON**
(1) 245, St. Louis, MO
- 1—WADE BARRETT**
(4) 265, Manchester, England
 - 2—JOHN CENA**
(3) 240, West Newbury, MA
 - 3—SHEAMUS**
(C) 272, Dublin, Ireland
 - 4—DANIEL BRYAN**
(-) 235, Aberdeen, WA
 - 5—THE MIZ**
(2) 230, Cleveland, OH
 - 6—C.M. PUNK**
(-) 222, Chicago, IL
 - 7—JOHN MORRISON**
(7) 223, Los Angeles, CA
 - 8—R-TRUTH**
(10) 228, Charlotte, NC
 - 9—TED DIBIASE JR.**
(8) 235, West Palm Beach, FL
 - 10—SANTINO MARELLA**
(-) 226, Calabria, Italy

SMACKDOWN

World Champion:

- KANE**
(C) 323, Hell
- 1—THE BIG SHOW**
(6) 485, Tampa, FL
 - 2—EDGE**
(-) 245, Toronto, ON
 - 3—DOLPH ZIGGLER**
(2) 221, Hollywood, CA
 - 4—THE UNDERTAKER**
(3) 299, Death Valley, CA
 - 5—CODY RHODES**
(9) 223, Marietta, NC
 - 6—ALBERTO DEL RIO**
(-) 240, San Luis Potosi, Mexico
 - 7—KOFI KINGSTON**
(4) 221, Ghana, West Africa
 - 8—DREW MCINTYRE**
(7) 252, Ayr, Scotland
 - 9—MVP**
(8) 259, Miami, FL
 - 10—JACK SWAGGER**
(10) 263, Perry, OK

TNA

World Champion:

- JEFF HARDY**
(3) 215, Cameron, NC
- 1—KURT ANGLE**
(1) 240, Pittsburgh, PA
 - 2—MR. ANDERSON**
(5) 243, Green Bay, WI
 - 3—ROB VAN DAM**
(-) 235, Battle Creek, MI
 - 4—ABYSS**
(4) 350, Parts Unknown
 - 5—SAMOA JOE**
(10) 280, American Samoa
 - 6—JAY LETHAL**
(-) 210 Union City, NJ
 - 7—D'ANGELO DINERO**
(-) 230, Harlem, NY
 - 8—AJ STYLES**
(2) 215 Gainesville, GA
 - 9—HERNANDEZ**
(9) 285, Houston, TX
 - 10—JEFF JARRETT**
(-) 235, Nashville, TN

RING OF HONOR

Champion:

- RODERICK STRONG**
(1) 215, Tampa, FL
- 1—CHRISTOPHER DANIELS**
(2) 224, Los Angeles, CA
 - 2—DAVEY RICHARDS**
(6) 205, Othello, WA
 - 3—HOMICIDE**
(-) 205, Brooklyn, NY
 - 4—KEVIN STEEN**
(3) 238, Marietta, QC
 - 5—EDDIE EDWARDS**
(7) 214, Boston, MA
 - 6—DELIRIOUS**
(10) 194, Edge of Sanity
 - 7—COLT CABANA**
(4) 233, Chicago, IL
 - 8—CHRIS HERO**
(5) 225, Metropolis
 - 9—KENNY KING**
(8) 235, Las Vegas, NV
 - 10—CLAUDIO CASTAGNOLI**
(-) 265, Shaffhausen, Switz.

Top 10 and Tag Team ratings are based on won-lost records for the past month, quality of opposition, and inherent skill of each wrestler or team. These ratings are compiled by the magazine's editorial board. All other ratings are based on the official current positions of challengers to the top title in each category; The number in parentheses indicates a wrestler's position in that category last issue; (-) indicates that the wrestler was not rated in that category last issue, while (C) indicates the wrestler was champion in that category last issue.

DRAGON GATE USA: Champion—BxB Hulk; 1—Shingo; 2—YAMATO; 3—CIMA; 4—Chuck Taylor; 5—Masato Yoshino; 6—Bryan Danielson; 7—Ricochet; 8—Jon Moxley; 9—Jimmy Jacobs; 10—Homicide.

EAST COAST WRESTLING ASSOCIATION: Champion—Andrew Ryker; 1—MEGA; 2—Glen Osbourne; 3—Aden Chambers; 4—Chase Del Monte; 5—Bazooka Joe; 6—Chris Wyke; 7—Mr. Scott Wright; 8—Travis Blake; 9—Courageous Cruz; 10—Freak Nasty.

EVOLVE: Champion—Vacant; 1—Jimmy Jacobs; 2—Drake Younger; 3—Chuck Taylor; 4—Johnny Gargano; 5—Bryan Danielson; 6—Sami Callihan; 7—Mike Quackenbush; 8—Munenori Sawa; 9—Chris Hero; 10—Claudio Castagnoli.

LIVE AMERICAN WRESTLING UK: Champion—Viken the Vampire; 1—Doink the Clown; 2—Lee Russell; 3—Brad Flash; 4—Jonny Rose; 5—Johnny Kidd; 6—Bad News Ben; 7—The Mighty Yankie; 8—Dylan Roberts; 9—Vicky Morton; 10—A.J. Spiffire.

MARYLAND CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING: Champion—Ryan McBride; 1—Teddy Stigma; 2—Christian York; 3—Carlito; 4—Cobian; 5—Tyler Hilton; 6—Hurricane Helms; 7—Ruckus; 8—Nui Tofiga; 9—Adam Cole; 10—Rich Swann.

NATIONAL INDEPENDENT CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING: Champion—Ken Steel; 1—Sgt. Jim Nelson; 2—Scott Lee; 3—Col. Spud Wade; 4—Eclipto; 5—Devon Mack; 6—Jeff Holland; 7—Damien James; 8—Ace Englund; 9—Christopher Cash; 10—The Dark Dragon.

NORTHEAST WRESTLING: Champion—Matt Taven; 1—Shelton Benjamin; 2—Carlito; 3—Abyss; 4—Tommy Dreamer; 5—Jerry Lawler; 6—Robbie E; 7—Brian Anthony; 8—Hurricane Helms; 9—Jake Manning; 10—Eddie Edwards.

OLD-TIME WRESTLING: Champion—C.K. Cross; 1—Craig Nash; 2—L.M. Smarter; 3—Bazooka Joe; 4—Brian Johnson; 5—Dan De Man; 6—Chris Bohern; 7—Adam Chandler; 8—Eddie Hawkins; 9—Anthony Haynes; 10—John Grayber.

PRIMAL CONFLICT WRESTLING: Champion—Tyler Steel; 1—Leslie Leatherman; 2—Julio Dinero; 3—Doug Delicious; 4—Bobby Shields; 5—John Kermion; 6—Kevin Thorn; 7—The Stro; 8—Rich Myers; 9—Jimmy Janetty; 10—Earl the Pearl.

SHOWTIME ALL-STAR WRESTLING: Champion—Chase Stevens; 1—Phil Shatter; 2—Tommy Mercer; 3—Vordell Walker; 4—Hammerjack; 5—Flash Flanagan; 6—Rick Santel; 7—Jesse Emerson; 8—Drew Haskins; 9—David Young; 10—Ryan Genesis.

TENNESSEE XTREME WRESTLING: Champion—Bobby Blassie; 1—Bob O Mac; 2—Travis Sawyer; 3—Shane Daniels; 4—Allen Shepard; 5—Nick Taylor; 6—The Demon; 7—Demetria; 8—Maskerade; 9—Dwayne Windham; 10—Funkmaster V.

WOMEN SUPERSTARS UNCENSORED: Champion—Mercedes Martinez; 1—Jazz; 2—Angel Orsini; 3—Alicia; 4—Rain; 5—Brittney Savage; 6—Amazing Kong; 7—Mickie James; 8—Nikki Roxx; 9—Traci Brooks; 10—Tina San Antonio.

NWA

Champion:

ADAM PEARCE

(C) 238, San Diego, CA

1—THE SHEIK

(3) 265, Tehran, Iran

2—PHIL SHATTER

(1) 247, Paris Island, SC

3—CHARLIE HAAS

(2) 249, Dallas, TX

4—COLT CABANA

(-) 233, Chicago, IL

5—ANTONIO THOMAS

(5) 235, Panama City, FL

6—SYD SYLUM

(8) 218, Las Vegas, NV

7—SHANE HASTE

(-) 205, Perth, Australia

8—BLUE DEMON JR.

(6) 194, Mexico City, Mexico

9—OLIVER JOHN

(10) 228, Sacramento, CA

10—CHANCE PROPHET

(-) 225, Chicago, IL

JAPAN

1—SATOSHI KOJIMA

(9) 250, Tokyo, Japan
IWGP heavyweight champion

2—TAKASHI SUGIURA

(2) 220, Nagoya, Japan
GHC heavyweight champion

3—SUWAMA

(10) 260, Kanagawa, Japan
AJPW Triple Crown champion

4—PRINCE DEVITT

(-) 178, Wicklow, Ireland

5—YOSHINOBU KANEMARU

(-) 190, Nagoya Japan

6—BxB HULK

(-) 170, Sapporo, Japan

7—KAZ HAYASHI

(-) 190, Tokyo, Japan

8—MINORU SUZUKI

(7) 220, Yokohama, Japan

9—GO SHIOZAKI

(4) 240, Kumamoto, Japan

10—MASATO TANAKA

(-) 220, Wakayama, Japan

MEXICO

1—ULTIMO GUERRERO

(8) 210, Gomez Palacio, Mexico
CMLL champion

2—DR. WAGNER JR.

(1) 220, Torreon, Mexico
AAA champion

3—JUSHIN LIGER

(-) 210, Hiroshima, Japan

4—MISTICO

(2) 165, Mexico City, Mexico

5—MASCARA DORADA

(6) 172, Guadalajara, Mexico

6—SILVER CAIN

(3) Torreon, Mexico

7—PERRO AGUAYO JR.

(-) 170, Zacatecas, Mexico

8—CIBERNETICO

(-) 240, Hell

9—VOLADOR JR.

(-) 190, Monclova, Mexico

10—EXTREME TIGER

(-) 150, Tijuana Baja, CA

WOMEN

1—MICHELLE MCCOOL

(6) 135, Palatka, FL
WWE Divas champion

2—MADISON RAYNE

(7) 115, Seattle, WA
TNA Knockouts champion

3—NATALYA

(-) 135, Calgary, AB

4—LAYLA EL

(4) 120, Miami, FL

5—MERCEDES MARTINEZ

(3) 147, Waterbury, CT

6—MADISON EAGLES

(5) 160, Sydney, Australia

7—LA REINA DE CORAZON

(-) 115, Oklahoma City, OK

8—ANGEL ORSINI

(-) 140, New Brunswick, NJ

9—BRITTANY FORCE

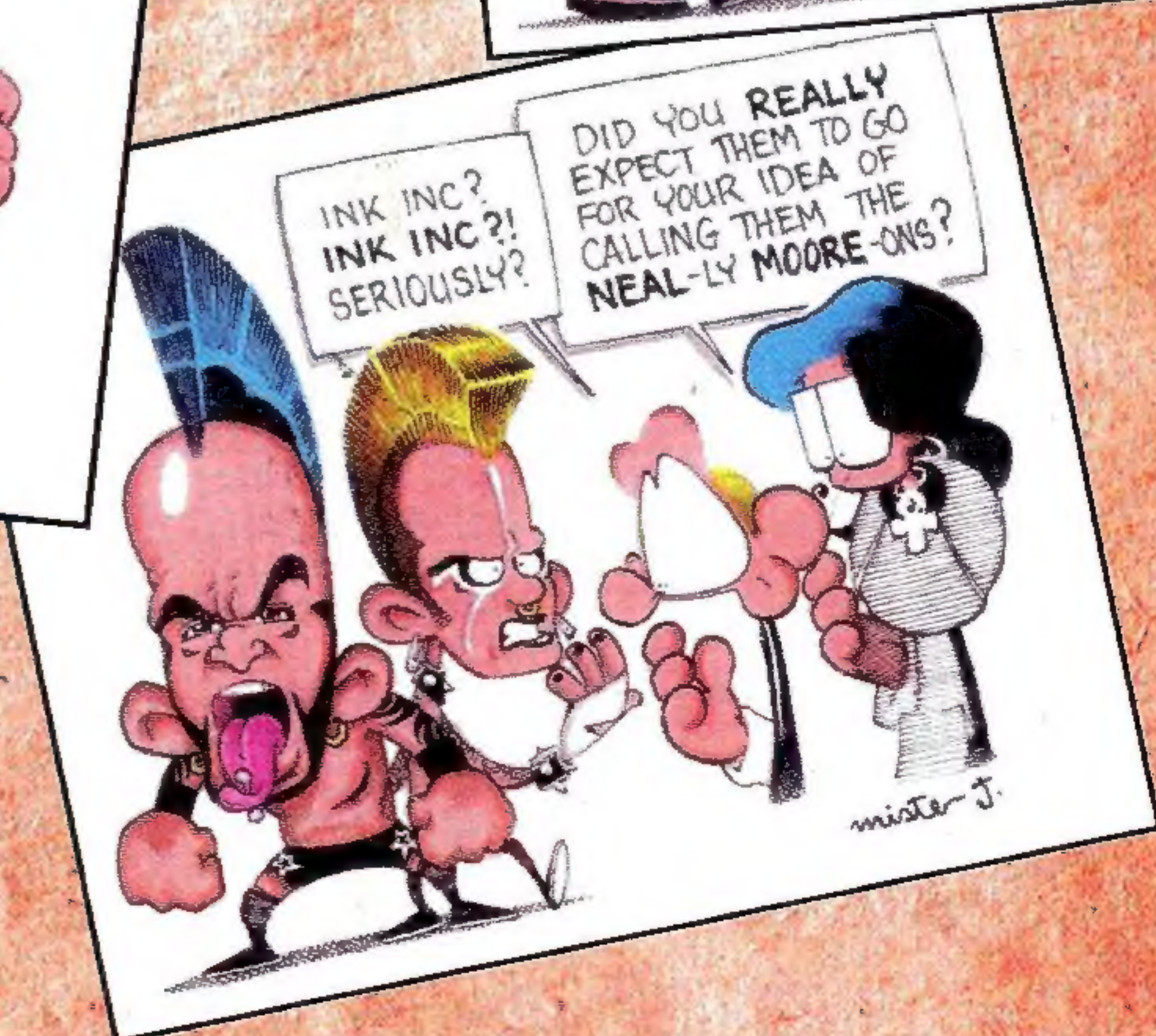
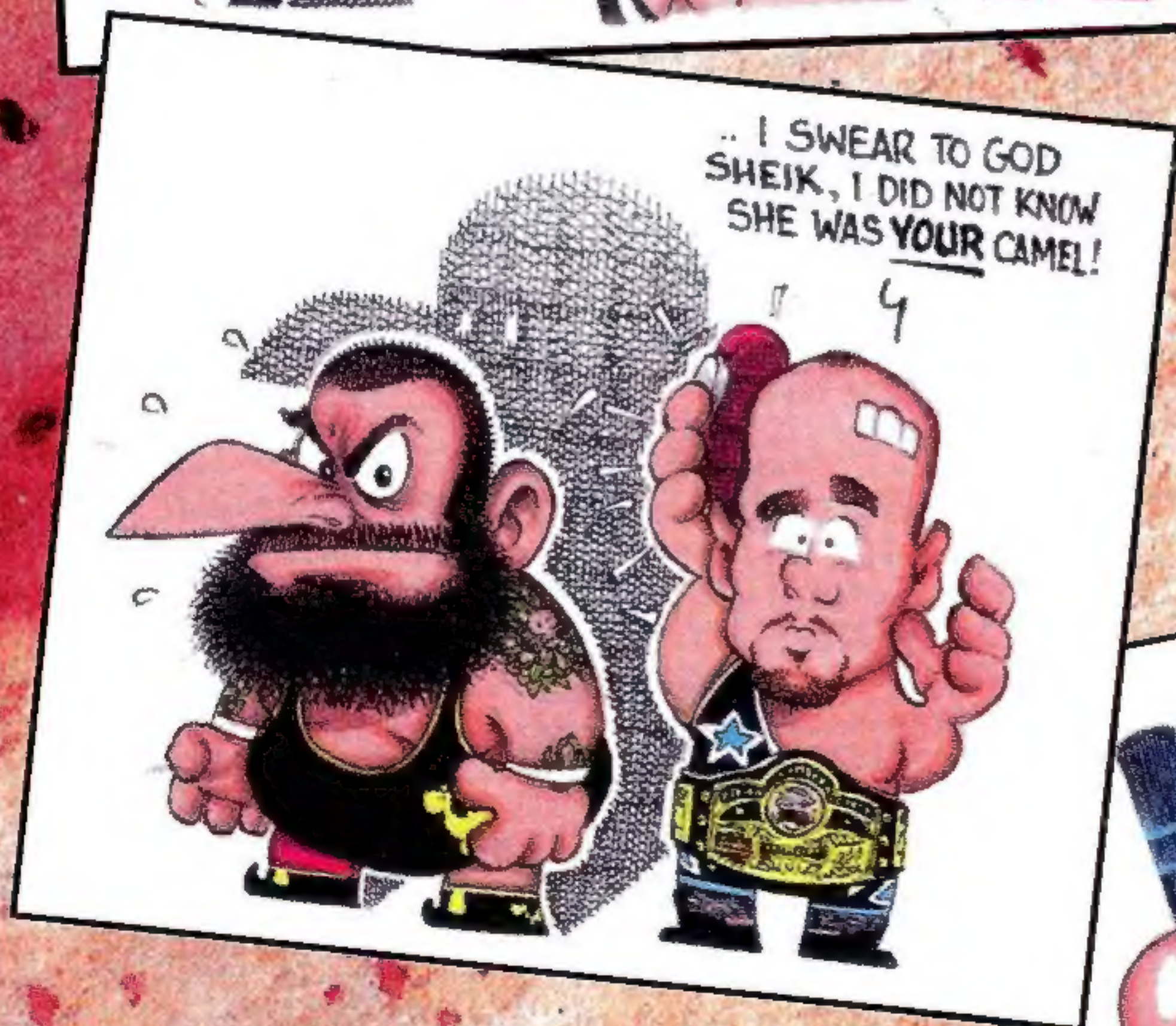
(-) 130, Johnstown, PA

10—DECEMBER

(-) 126, Chicago, IL

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